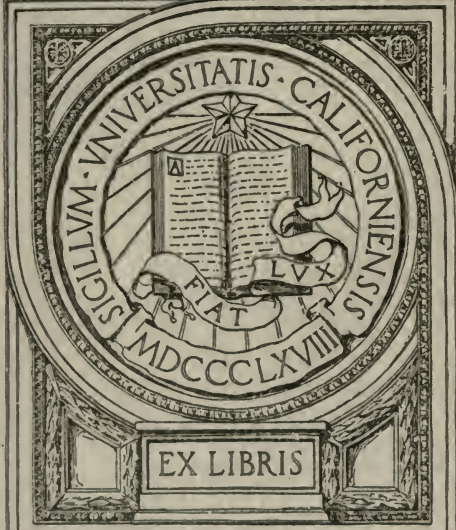
# HISTORICAL BALLAD POETRY OF IRELAND



M. J. BROWN

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# HISTORICAL BALLAD POETRY OF IRELAND

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THOMAS MOORE

# HISTORICAL BALLAD POETRY OF IRELAND

Arranged by

M. J. BROWN

With an Introduction by

STEPHEN J. BROWN, S.J.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

The Educational Company of Ireland Limited : : : : Dublin and Belfast

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Gaelic League

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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# INTRODUCTION

WHEN we have said that this is an attempt—the first so far as printed books go—to carry out one of the favourite ideas of Thomas Davis, little, we think, remains to say by way of introducing it to the reader. We have but to put before him Davis's own words about a similar project. It had been proposed by a writer in the *Nation* to write ballads on the great events in our annals and to collect them into a Ballad History of Ireland. Here is Davis's comment: "The first object of the projected work will be to make Irish History familiar to the minds, pleasant to the ears, dear to the passions, and powerful over the taste and conduct of the Irish people in times to come. More *events* could be put into a prose history. Exact dates, subtle plots, minute connexions and motives rarely appear in ballads, and for these ends the worst prose history is superior to the best ballad series; but these are not the highest ends of history. To hallow or accurse the scenes of glory and honour, or of shame and sorrow; to give to the imagination the arms, and homes, and senates, and battles of other days; to rouse, and soften, and strengthen and enlarge us with the passions of great periods; to lead us into love of self-denial, of justice, of beauty, of valour, of generous life and proud death; and to set up in our souls the memory of great men, who shall then be as models and judges of our actions—these are the highest duties of history, and these are best taught by a Ballad History.

"A Ballad History is welcome to childhood, from its rhymes, its high colouring, and its aptness to memory. As we

grow into boyhood the violent passions, the vague hopes, the romantic sorrow of patriot ballads are in tune with our fitful and luxuriant feelings. In manhood we prize the condensed narrative, the grave firmness, the critical art, and the political sway of ballads. And in old age they are doubly dear; the companions and reminders of our life, the toys and teachers of our children and grandchildren. Every generation finds its account in them. They pass from mouth to mouth like salutations; and even the minds which lose their words are under their influence, as one can recall the starry heavens who cannot revive the form of a single constellation."[1]

We do not think that anything we might add could explain more fitly than these words do the objects aimed at by this publication. We merely sum them up by saying that it aims at doing for Irish History what Davis's projected Ballad History would have done had it ever seen the light.

Several works that aim at doing all this for English History have long since appeared. Such are the following, among others :—

*Poems of English Heroes.* Ed. by A. C. Auchmuty; (Kegan Paul), 1882. A new ed. has recently been brought out by Messrs. Blackwood. [The old ed. does not mention Ireland.]

*Poems and Ballads on English History.* Published by Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1910, in three books (Junior, Intermediate, and Senior), each covering the whole period. [One poem about Ireland.]

*English History in English Poetry.* By C. H. Firth; (Marshall), 1911, pp. lxi. + 240, covering period from French Revolution to Death of Queen Victoria. [A section on Ireland, seven poems.]

*English Patriotic Poetry*, selected and arranged by L. Godwin Salt, M.A. Cambridge University Press, 1911.

[1] In *'The Song Lore of Ireland,'* by Redfern Mason, a book published in America in 1910, I find the following:—"Ireland's bardic poems, ballads, and folk-songs carry her story back to the Christian dawn and even earlier. They are history with the added charm of a personal note, a thrill of actuality, not to be found in annals and chronicles. They sing the hopes and fears of the people in epic moments of their national life."

To this class of works, too, belongs a recent book of a more ambitious kind, *Poetry of Empire*, a volume very handsomely brought out by Messrs. T. C. & E. C. Jack. It is a collection of poems for boys and girls describing the most stirring events of British History from the earliest to the present times, chronologically arranged.

All of these publications, excellent as they are for the purpose they aim at, are at one in practically eschewing Irish history. Now I think it will be admitted by any one acquainted with Anglo-Irish poetry that it contains patriotic and historical lyrics in no way inferior to any that might be used to illustrate British history. Indeed, Mr. L. Godwin Salt in his introduction to the book mentioned above admits more than this. "There can be nothing," he says, "in our patriotic literature to compare with the poetry of the Celts, with its burden of longing and regret, and its passionate outcry against tyranny and injustice, since by a just law of compensation it is always the downtrodden and exiles who have sung those 'sweetest songs that tell of saddest thoughts.'"

The question of the relative literary merit of such poems concerns us, however, but little. What concerns us is their message to us as Irishmen. Necessarily they mean things to us that they cannot mean to men of other nations. For, beyond and above the fact that they are stirring or inspiring or impassioned, is the fact that they tell of deeds that were done or sufferings that were borne within our own land by our fathers in the past. They are full of names that are memories.

Yet when all is said—and much can be said—for Anglo-Irish poetry, we hold it to be at best but a temporary expedient. Great literature—I mean, of course, the literature of feeling and imagination, not the literature of knowledge—cannot be written in a language that is not a nation's own. If a literature at once distinctively national and great enough to be European is ever to be written in Ireland, it must be written, not in the language of Sheridan and Moore and Goldsmith, but in the long despised language of Keating.

Meantime—for the days of such a literature may be as yet far off—we believe that the ballads that stirred Ireland so deeply in the days of Davis and the *Nation*, with many other such, written before and since, may have a message still for our own generation.

STEPHEN J. BROWN, S.J.

# EDITOR'S NOTE

IN this collection of Irish historical poems, it has been my endeavour to show no prejudice political or otherwise, and I have therefore, whenever possible, included poems on the same events from different points of view. Unfortunately, in many instances the poets have all looked from one point of view, or their opponents' work has not sufficient literary value to warrant its inclusion in the collection.

Poets, from their very nature, can never be reliable historians. They feel too strongly, and they picture events in the hot glare of their own feelings rather than in the cold light of truth. Yet poetry is a very useful, almost an essential, accompaniment to the dull study of history. The heroes of the past live again in song, and we realize their difficulties and achievements. In such a poem as Roger Casement's "Battle of Benburb" we shudder and are yet uplifted as the battle surges on to its final triumph. The prose account of such a battle would scarce move us more than a game of chess. And if our patriotism needs arousing, what Irish heart could help echoing to the notes of love in Mangan's "Dark Rosaleen"?

The preliminary notes to the poems throughout the book are meant to connect the historical events and to make clear anything obscure in the poems themselves.

M. J. B.

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# THE FIRST PERIOD

## FROM THE COMING OF THE MILESIANS TO RUAIDHU O'CONOR, 1166

# THE FIRST PERIOD

*From the Coming of the Milesians to Ruaidhu O'Conor*, 1166

## THE CELTS

### By Thomas D'Arcy McGee

**At the dispersal of nations in the East three great branches of the human family are distinguished—the Aryan, Turanian and the Semitic. It is to the Aryan branch that the Celts belong. When they entered Europe it is impossible to say; probably long before the dawn of history. They were established on the Danube, perhaps 1000 B.C., and about four centuries later they were settled in Gaul. Making this as their headquarters they often invaded Italy, sacked Rome, and finally conquered North Italy and settled there, while others of them crossed the Pyrenees and mingling their blood with the Iberians formed the Celtiberians of North Spain. The Celts also settled in Switzerland, in Illyria, Macedonia and Thrace; and one adventurous band crossed the Hellespont and became masters of the province of Galatia. Others passed over to Britain and Ireland, these probably belonging to the first wave of Celts who entered Europe, and who were gradually pushed west by the pressure of succeeding waves of Celts rolling westward. It is purely a matter of conjecture whether the Celts who settled in Ireland found there an earlier race, as the Celts found the Iberians beyond the Pyrenees, and it is also a matter of conjecture when they reached Ireland. But as the Celts had become so strong in Gaul as early as 600 B.C., it is likely that by that time at least some adventurous spirits had crossed to Ireland.**

LONG, long ago, beyond the misty space
Of twice a thousand years;
In Erin old there dwelt a mighty race
Taller than Roman spears;
Like oaks and towers they had a giant grace,
Were fleet as deers,
With winds and waves they made their 'biding place,
These western shepherd seers.

Their Ocean God was Mân-â-nân, McLir,[1]
Whose angry lips,
In their white foam, full often would inter
Whole fleets of ships;

[1] McLir means Son of the Sea. He was supposed to have control of the weather, and so was worshipped by mariners.

Cromah their Day-God, and their Thunderer
Made morning and eclipse;
Bride[1] was their queen of song, and unto her
They prayed with fire-touched lips.

Great were their deeds, their passions and their sports;
With clay and stone
They piled on strath and shore those mystic forts,
Not yet o'erthrown;
On cairn-crown'd[2] hills they held their council-courts;
While youths alone,
With giant dogs, explored the elk[3] resorts,
And brought them down.

Of these was Finn,[4] the father of the Bard,
Whose ancient song
Over the clamour of all change is heard
Sweet-voiced and strong.
Finn once o'ertook Grainne, the golden-hair'd,
The fleet and young;
From her, the lovely, and from him, the fear'd,
The primal poet sprung.

Ossian! two thousand years of mist and change
Surround thy name—
Thy Fenian heroes now no longer range
The hills of fame.
The very name of Finn and Goll sound strange—
Yet thine the same—
By miscalled lake and desecrated grange—
Remains and shall remain!

[1] *Bride, or Bridget,* was the daughter of the pagan god Dagda and was herself the goddess of poetry and wisdom. The first famous Irish Christian who bore the name was St. Bridget of Kildare.

[2] *Cairn* is a mound of stones raised as a monument to the dead.

[3] The *elk* is now extinct in Ireland; it was an enormous specimen of antlered deer.

[4] *Finn.*—This was the famous Finn Macumhael, son-in-law of the Ardri Cormac Mac Art, Grainne being Cormac's daughter.

The Druid's altar and the Druid's creed
We scarce can trace.
There is not left an undisputed deed
Of all your race,
Save your majestic song, which hath their speed,
And strength and grace;
In that sole song, they live and love and bleed—
It bears them on thro' space.

Oh, inspir'd giant! shall we e'er behold,
In our own time,
One fit to speak your spirit on the wold,
Or seize your rhyme?
One pupil of the past as mighty-soul'd
As in the prime,
Were the fond, fair, and beautiful, and bold—
They, of your song sublime!

*B.C.* 1400

*The Arrival of the Milesians*

## THE SONG OF INNISFAIL

By Thomas Moore

The Milesians were so called from their leader Miledh or Milesius, and were a Celtic people. The tradition was that they came from Spain, having come to Spain after many wanderings on land and sea since they left their original home in Scythia. While they were yet in Spain one of their druids foretold that their destined home was an island in the western sea. This was Ireland, which is therefore often called Innisfail, or the Isle of Destiny.

THEY came from a land beyond the sea,
And now o'er the western main
Set sail, in their good ships, gallantly,
From the sunny land of Spain.
"Oh, where's the Isle we've seen in dreams,
Our destin'd home or grave?"
Thus sung they as, by the morning's beams,
They swept the Atlantic wave.

And lo, where afar o'er ocean shines
A sparkle of radiant green,
As though in that deep lay emerald mines
Whose light through the wave was seen.
"'Tis Innisfail—'tis Innisfail!"
Rings o'er the echoing sea;
While bending to heaven the warriors hail
That home of the brave and free.

Then turn'd they unto the Eastern wave
Where now their Day God's eye
A look of such sunny omen gave
As lighted up sea and sky.
Nor frown was seen through sky or sea,
Nor tear o'er leaf or sod,
When first on their Isle of Destiny
Our great forefathers trod.

## THE CHILDREN OF USNACH

### AVENGING AND BRIGHT

By Thomas Moore

The sons of Usnach were Naoise, Ainle and Ardan, all valiant warriors among the Red Branch Knights. Deirdre was the daughter of Feidhlim, chief story teller of Conor Macnessa, King of Ulster. At her birth, which occurred while the king and many others were being entertained at her father's house, the king's druid predicted that she would one day bring many evils on Ulster, and it was in consequence proposed to put her to death. But the king intervened, and taking her with him had her brought up at one of the castles of the Red Branch Knights, where, till near her fourteenth year she never saw a man. When she was fourteen the king wished to make her his wife, but Deirdre had already seen and become enamoured of Naoise and by him and his two brothers she was taken to Alba (Scotland). King Connor, however, sent Fergus Macroigh to Alba to invite Deirdre and the three sons of Usnach back to Ulster, giving his royal word that no harm would befall them. But no sooner had they come into his power than the sons of Usnach were attacked and slain, and Deirdre was taken possession of by the king. A year later she died of grief. The king's druid also cursed Emania, where the king resided, because the king had broken his word, and Emania in time became a ruin. Further, Fergus Macroigh leaving Ulster took service with the Queen of Connaught, who made war on Ulster. Thus was the pro-

phecy of the druid fulfilled that Deirdre would bring many ills on her native province.

It is plain from this poem that Moore believed that Conor Mac Nessa was responsible for the base betrayal of the sons of Usnach.

AVENGING and Bright fall the swift sword of Erin
On him who the brave sons of Usna betrayed—
For every fond eye he hath wakened a tear in
A drop from his heart-wounds shall weep o'er her blade.

By the red cloud that hung over Conor's dark dwelling
When Ulad's three champions lay sleeping in gore--
By the billows of war which so often, high swelling,
Have wafted these heroes to victory's shore—

We swear to revenge them !—no joy shall be tasted,
The harp shall be silent, the maiden unwed.
Our halls shall be mute and our fields shall be wasted
Till vengeance is wreaked on the murderer's head.

Yes, monarch ! though sweet are our home recollections,
Though sweet are the tears that from tenderness fall ;
Though sweet are our friendships, our hopes, our affections,
Revenge on a tyrant is sweetest of all.

## THE DEATH OF KING CONOR MAC NESSA

### By T. D. Sullivan

"I have alluded to doubts suggested in my mind by the facts of authentic history as to whether King Conor Mac Nessa was likely to have played the foul part attributed to him in this celebrated Bardic Story (The Fate of Deirdre and the Sons of Usnach). . . . All that can be said is, that no other incident recorded of him would warrant such an estimate of his character ; and it is certain that he was a man of many brave and noble parts. He met his death under truly singular circumstances. The ancient bardic version of the event is almost literally given in the following poem by Mr. T. D. Sullivan."—*The Story of Ireland,* by A. M. Sullivan.

TWAS a day full of sorrow for Ulster when Conor
Mac Nessa went forth
To punish the clansmen of Connaught who dared to take
spoil from the north ;

For his men brought him back from the battle scarce better than one that was dead,
With the brain-ball of Mesgedra buried two-thirds deep in his head.
His royal physician bent o'er him, great Fingen, who often before
Staunched the war-battered bodies of heroes, and built them for battle once more,
And he looked on the wound of the monarch and heark'd to his low-breathed sighs,
And he said, "In the day when that missile is loosed from his forehead, he dies.

"Yet long midst the people who love him King Conor Mac Nessa may reign,
If always the high pulse of passion be kept from his heart and his brain:
And for this I lay down his restrictions:—no more from this day shall his place
Be with armies in battles or hostings or leading the van of the chase;
At night when the banquet is flashing his measure of wine must be small,
And take heed that the bright eyes of women be kept from his sight, above all;
For if heart-thrilling joyance or anger awhile o'er his being have power
The ball will start forth from his forehead, and surely he dies in that hour."

Oh! woe for the valiant King Conor, struck down from the summit of life,
While glory unclouded shone round him, and regal enjoyment was rife—

Shut out from his toils and his duties, condemned to ignoble repose,
No longer to friends a true helper, no longer a scourge to his foes!
He, the strong-handed smiter of champions, the piercer of armour and shields,
The foremost in earth-shaking onsets, the last out of blood-sodden fields—
The mildest, the kindest, the gayest, when revels ran high in his hall—
Oh, well might his true-hearted people feel gloomy and sad for his fall!

The princes, the chieftains, the nobles, who met to consult at his board,
Whispered low when their talk was of combats, and wielding the spear and the sword:
The bards from their harps feared to waken the full pealing sweetness of song
To give homage to valour or beauty, or praise to the wise and the strong;
The flash of no joy-giving story made cheers or gay laughter resound,
Amidst silence constrained and unwonted the seldom-filled winecup went round;
And, sadder to all who remembered the glories and joys that had been,
The heart swaying presence of woman not once shed its light on the scene.

He knew it, he felt it, and sorrow sunk daily more deep in his heart;
He wearied of doleful inaction, from all his loved labours apart.

He sat at his door in the sunlight, sore grieving and weeping to see
The life and the motion around him, and nothing so stricken as he.
Above him the eagle went wheeling, before him the deer galloped by,
And the quick-legged rabbits went skipping from green glades and burrows anigh,
The song birds sang out from the copses, the bees passed on musical wing,
And all things were happy and busy, save Conor Mac Nessa the King!

So years had passed over, when, sitting midst silence like that of the tomb
A terror crept through him as, sudden, the moonlight was blackened with gloom.
One red flare of lightning blazed brightly, illuming the landscape around,
One thunder peal roared through the mountains, and rumbled and crashed underground;
He heard the rocks bursting asunder, the trees tearing up by the roots,
And loud through the horrid confusion the howling of terrified brutes.
From the halls of his tottering palace came screamings of terror and pain,
And he saw crowding thickly around him the ghosts of the foes he had slain!

And as soon as the sudden commotion that shuddered through nature had ceased,
The king sent for Barach, his druid, and said: "Tell me truly, O priest,

What magical arts have created this scene of wild horror and dread ?
What has blotted the blue sky above us and shaken the earth that we tread ?
Are the gods that we worship offended ? What crime or what wrong has been done ?
Has the fault been committed in Erin, and how may their favour be won ?
What rites may avail to appease them ? What gifts on their altars should smoke ?
Only say, and the offering demanded, we lay by your consecrate oak."

" O king," said the white-bearded druid, " the truth unto me has been shown ;
There lives but *one* God, the Eternal ; far up in high Heaven is His throne.
He looked upon men with compassion, and sent from His kingdom of light
His Son, in the shape of a mortal, to teach them and guide them aright.
Near the time of your birth, O King Conor, the Saviour of mankind was born,
And since then in the kingdoms far eastward He taught, toiled, and prayed till this morn,
When wicked men seized Him, fast bound Him with nails to a Cross, lanced His Side,
And that moment of gloom and confusion was Earth's cry of dread when He died.

" O King, He was gracious and gentle, His heart was all pity and love,
And for men he was ever beseeching the grace of His Father above ;

He helped them, He healed them, He blessed them, He laboured that all might attain
To the true God's high kingdom of glory, where never comes sorrow or pain,
But they rose in their pride and their folly, their hearts filled with merciless rage,
That only the sight of His life-blood fast poured from His heart could assuage.
Yet, while on the cross-beams uplifted, His Body, racked, tortured and riven,
He prayed—not for justice or vengeance, but asked that His foes be forgiven."

With a bound from his seat rose King Conor, the red flush of rage on his face,
Fast he ran through the hall for his weapons, and snatching his sword from its place
He rushed to the woods, striking wildly at boughs that dropped down with each blow,
And he cried: "Were I midst the vile rabble, I'd cleave them to earth even so!
With the stroke of a high-king of Erin, the whirls of my keen-tempered sword
I would save from their horrible fury that mild and that merciful lord."
His frame shook and heaved with emotion, the brain-ball leaped forth from his head,
And commending his soul to that Saviour, King Conor Mac Nessa fell dead.

## THE IRELAND OF THE DRUIDS

### By Thomas D'Arcy Magee

**The druidism of Ireland, as pictured forth in the native records, differed in many respects from that of Gaul. In pagan times the Druids were the exclusive possessors of whatever learning was then known. They combined in themselves all the learned professions: they were not only druids, but judges, prophets, historians, poets and even physicians. . . . The druids had the reputation of being great magicians; and in this character they figure more frequently and conspicuously than in any other. . . . Laegaire's Druids foretold the coming of St. Patrick.—*Smaller Social History of Ireland*, P. W. Joyce.**

A THOUSAND years had seen the shore
Of Erin by our race possessed,
Since the Milesian galleys bore
From Spain, into the unknown West.
A thousand years, and every year
A forest fell—a clan arose,
And Scots of Ireland far and near
Had conquered fame and friends and foes.
Wise laws by Olamh [1] early framed
And Ogman's [2] letters spread as wide
As Scotia's blood, earth's homage claimed,
A homage then by none denied.

It was an island fair and bland,
Lying within its pale sea wall
Still belted round with forests grand,
Braving the stormy ocean's squall.
The trapper by the mountain rill
Watched for his prey with eager eye;
The elk still walked his native hill
In free and fearless majesty;

[1] *Olamh.* Ollam Todla (Ollav-Tola), who was King of Ireland seven or eight centuries before the Christian era. (Joyce's *Smaller Social History.*)

[2] *Ogman.* Ogham was a species of writing, the letters of which were formed by combination of short lines and points on, and at both sides of a middle or stem line called a flex. (Joyce's *Smaller Social History.*)

The Asian arts as yet abode
By river, ford and chief's domain;
And Druids to their thundering God
Gave thanks for seas of summer rain.

"The Druids!" sad mysterious word
Whence comes that meaning unexpressed,
Which every Celtic pulse hath stirred,
Rousing old thoughts in brain and breast?
Dear was the name to our first sires,
Dear every symbol of their line;
Awe-struck they saw their altar-fires
And deemed their mystic chaunts divine.
O'er anger's heart the Druid's breath
Passed like the healing southern breeze,
And warriors on the field of death
Chaunted their odes in extasies.

'Twas past, a foreign rumour ran
Along the peopled Eastern shore,
A legend of a God and Man
And of a Crown and Cross He bore.
At first 'twas like a morning tale
Told by a dreamer to a few,
Till year by year among the Gael
More wide the circling story grew,
A mingled web of false and true,
'Twas passed about on every side,
The when, or where, they scarcely knew,
But all agree He lived and died
Far in the East—the Crucified.

Travellers who had been long abroad,
Returning, shunned the public sight
To serve—'twas said—the Unknown God
With harp and hymn and harmless rite.

One, bolder than the rest, essayed
To spread his creed on Leinster's shore,
But by a tumult sore dismayed
He fled and ventured back no more.
Palladius—like a courier came
And spoke, and went—or like St. John
To the broad desert breathed the Name
Of the Expected—and was gone.
Leaving to every pagan sere
The future full of doubt and fear.

## 432 *A.D.*

## ST. PATRICK AND THE BARD

By Aubrey de Vere

King Laegaire, who was High King of Erinn when St. Patrick commenced his mission, was son of Niall of the Nine Hostages. On St. Patrick's visit to Tara, King Laegaire's proceedings were regulated by the advice of his two chief druids, Lucetmail and Lochru.

THE land is sad and dark our days:
Sing us a song of the days that were!—
Then sang the Bard in his Order's praise
This song of the chief bard of King Laeghaire.[1]

I

The King is wrath with a greater wrath
Than the wrath of Niall or the wrath of Conn!
From his heart to his brow the blood makes path
And hangs there a red cloud beneath his crown.

II

Is there any who knows not from south to north
That Laeghaire to-morrow his birthday keeps?

[1] It is said that King Laeghaire became a Christian but relapsed into paganism, thinking he would disgrace his ancestors if he abandoned the religion which they professed.

No fire may be lit upon hill or hearth
Till the King's strong fire in his kingly mirth
Leaps upward from Tara's palace steeps!

III

Yet Patrick has lighted his paschal fire
At Slane—it is holy Saturday,—
And bless'd his font mid the chaunting choir!
From hill to hill the flame makes way:
While the King looks on it, his eyes with ire
Flash red like Mars, under tresses grey.

IV

The great King's captains with drawn swords rose;
To avenge their Lord and the State they swore;
The Druids rose and their garments tore;
"The strangers to us and our gods are foes."
Then the King to Patrick a herald sent,
Who said, "Come up at noon and show
Who lit thy fire and with what intent?—
These things the great King Laeghaire would know."

V

But Laeghaire concealed twelve men in the way
Who swore by the sun the saint to slay.

VI

When the Boyne waters began to bask,
And the fields to flash in the rising sun,
The Apostle Evangelist kept his Pasch,
And Erin her grace baptismal won:
Her birthday it was;—his font the rock,
He bless'd the land and he bless'd his flock.



AUBREY DE VERE

VII

Then forth to Tara he fared full lowly:
The Staff of Jesus was in his hand;
Eight priests paced after him chaunting slowly,
Printing their steps on the dewy land.
It was the Resurrection morn;
The lark sang loud o'er the springing corn;
The dove was heard and the hunter's horn.

VIII

The murderers stood close by on the way,
Yet they saw naught save the lambs at play.

IX

A trouble lurk'd in the King's strong eye
When the guests that he counted for dead drew nigh.
He sat in state at his palace gate;
His chiefs and his nobles were ranged around;
The Druids like ravens smelt some far fate;
Their eyes were gloomily bent on the ground.
Then spake Laeghaire: "He comes—beware!
Let none salute him, or rise from his chair!"

X

Like some still vision men see by night,
Mitred, with eyes of serene command,
Saint Patrick moved onward in ghostly white:
The Staff of Jesus was in his hand.
His priests paced after him unafraid.
And the boy Benignus,[1] more like a maid,
Like a maid just wedded he walk'd and smiled,
To Christ new-plighted, that priestly child.

[1] *Benignus* was a native of Meath, one of St. Patrick's first converts, always one of his most attached followers, and before his death was coadjutor to St. Patrick in the see of Armagh.

XI

They enter'd the circle; their hymn they ceased;
The Druids their eyes bent earthward still:
On Patrick's brow the glory increased,
As a sunrise brightening some breathless hill.
The warriors sat silent: strange awe they felt:—
The chief bard, Dubtach, rose up and knelt!

XII

Then Patrick discoursed of the things to be
When time gives way to eternity,
Of kingdoms that cease, which are dreams, not things,
And the kingdom built by the King of Kings.
Of Him, he spake, Who reigns from the Cross;
Of the death which is life and the life which is loss;
And how all things were made by the Infant Lord
And the Small Hand the Magian kings adored.
His voice sounded on like a throbbing flood
That swells all night from some far-off wood,
And when it was ended—that wondrous strain—
Invisible myriads breathed low, "Amen!"

XIII

While he spake men say that the refluent tide
On the shore beside Colpa ceased to sink.
And they say the white deer by Mulla's side
O'er the green marge bending forebore to drink:
That the Brandon eagle forgat to soar;
That no leaf stirr'd in the wood by Lee.—
Such stupor hung the island o'er
For none might guess what the end would be.

XIV

Then whispered the King to a chief close by,
"It were better for me to believe than die!"

XV

Yet the King believed not; but ordinance gave
That those who would might believe that word:
So the meek believed, and the wise, and brave
And Mary's Son as their god adored.
Ethnea and Fethlimea, his daughters twain
That day were in baptism born again;
And the Druids, because they could answer naught
Bow'd down to the faith the stranger brought.
That day upon Erin God pour'd His Spirit,—
Yet none like the chief of the Bards had merit.
Dubtach!—He rose and believed the first,
Ere the great light yet on the rest had burst.

It was thus that Erin, then blind but strong,
To Christ through her chief bard paid homage due:
And this was a sign that in Erin, song
Should from first to last to the Cross be true!

## THE PASCHAL FIRE OF PATRICK

By Denis Florence MacCarthy

ON Tara's hill the daylight dies,
On Tara's plain 'tis dead.
"Till Baal's unkindled fires shall rise
No fire must flame instead."
'Tis thus the King commanding speaks,
Commands and speaks in vain;
For lo! a fire defiant breaks
From out the woods of S'ane,

For there in prayer is Patrick bent,
With Christ his soul is knit;
And there before his simple tent
The Paschal fire is lit.
"What means this flame that through the night
Illumines all the vale?
What rebel hand a fire dare light
Before the fires of Baal?"

O King! when Baal's dark reign is o'er,
When thou thyself art gone,
This fire will light the Irish shore
And lead its people on.
Will lead them on full many a night
Through which they're doomed to go,
Like that which led the Israelite
From bondage and from woe.

This fire, this sacred fire of God,
Young hearts shall bear afar
To lands no human foot hath trod
Beneath the Western Star.
To lands where Faith's bright flag unfurl'd
By those who here have knelt
Shall give unto a newer world
The sceptre of the Celt.

## 521 *A.D.*

## COLUMKILLE IN EXILE

### By P. J. McCall

St. Columba was born in 521 at Gartan, Co. Donegal, and lived to 597. . . . "After he came to be a youth he went to Strangford, where he studied under St. Finian. . . . Columba was ordained and lived for a while in a monastery at Glasnevin, near Dublin; thence he returned to his own country and founded his first monastery at Derry, the first of those many foundations which earned him his title of Columkille (Dove of the Churches)—they are too many to enumerate here." (*Highways and Byways in Donegal and Antrim*, by Stephen Gwynn.) . . There soon arose disputes between Columba and Diarmid Ardri of Ireland. St. Columba had a dispute with St. Finian over the ownership of a copy of the Psalter. The matter was referred to the arbitration of Diarmid, but St. Columba was not satisfied with his decision. Angry at what he considered the king s injustice, the saint stirred up the northern Clan-na-Niall against Diarmid, whom they defeated at Cooldrevny (Caildreimhne). Another battle was the consequence of a dispute between St. Columba and St. Congall, of Bangor. But the Saint bitterly repented, and his penance was surely terribly severe. It was nothing less than perpetual exile from the land he loved with all his great fiery heart. He left Ireland in 563, and founded the great monastery of Iona, where he spent the remainder of his days.

O! SON of my God, 'twere pleasant,
If I with my own dear train
Could glide and go, o'er the deluge-flow
To mine Erinn back again!
O'er Moylurg and a'past Binn Eigny,
And across Lough Foyal's breast,
Where the gull's keen cry, and the swan's sweet sigh
Would herald my homing quest!

How eager and glad my corrach
My Dewy Red would fly
To that Eastern nook whence the fishers look,
With a sad sea-farer's eye,
For nothing can cheer my exile,
Nor kine, nor corn, nor gold—
I but sit alone, and make my moan,
For the better things of old.

Ah! nothing can cheer my exile!
O, King of the Secrets, see
My woe to-day that Cool's red fray[1]
Turned once my face from thee!
Thrice happy, thou son of Dima,[2]
In thy holy cell apart,
At Durrow's fane where every strain
Is a pleasure to the heart!

There the west wind murmurs music
Among the leafy elms;
And the blackbird sings, as he claps his wings
From a flight to sunlit realms;
And the cattle on green Binn Grencha
Are lowing at break of day;
And the cuckoos fly with a cooing cry
O'er the brink of dewy May.

Ochone! I have left in Erinn
Earth's three most precious things—
Blest Durrow's rood, loved Derry's wood,
And Laidag's land of springs!
How I loved cascaded Erinn
In all except her wrongs,
Where Congal's face and Cannach's grace
Made my sweet song of songs!

[1] Cool's red fray. Cooldrevny.
[2] *The son of Dimna* was Cormac, abbot of Durrow, as well as bishop, a contemporary and also a personal friend of St. Columkille.

## A LAMENT FOR THE FENIANS

By John O'Tuomy

*Translated by* J. C. Mangan

"The Fianna, or Fena of Erinn, so far as we can trace their history with any certainty, lasted for about a century. They attained their greatest power in the reign of Cormac mac Art (254–277) under their most renowned commander, Finn, the son of Curnal, or Finn Mac Coole as he is commonly called, King Cormac's son-in-law, who is recorded in the Annals to have been killed beside the Boyne, when an old man."—Joyce, *Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland.*

IT makes my grief, my bitter woe,
To think how lie our nobles low,
Without sweet music, bards, or lays,
Without esteem, regard, or praise.

O, my peace of soul is fled,
I lie outstretched like one half dead,
To see the chieftains old and young,
Thus trod by the churls of the dismal congue:

Oh! who can well refrain from tears,
Who sees the hosts of a thousand years
Expelled from this their own green isle
And bondsmen to the Base and Vile?
O, my peace, etc.

Here dwelt the race of Eoghan[1] of old,
The great, the proud, the strong, the bold,
The pure in speech, the bright in face,
The noblest House of the Fenian race!
O, my peace, etc.

[1] Eoghan Mor, King of Munster in the second century. He was a rival of Conn of the hundred battles.

Here dwelt Mac Cumhal [1] of the Flaxen Locks,
And his bands the first in Battle's shocks;
Dubhlaing, Mac Duinn, of the smiting swords,
And Coillte, first of heroic lords.
O, my peace, etc.

The Goll, who forced all foes to yield,
And Osgur, mighty on battle-field,
And Conall, too, who ne'er knew fear,
They, not the Stranger, then dwelt here.
O, my peace, etc.

Here dwelt the race of Eibhear [2] and Ir
The heroes of the dark blue spear,
The royal tribe of Heremon, too,
That King who fostered champions true.
O, my peace, etc.

And Niall [3] the Great of the silken gear,
For a season bore the sceptre here
With the Red Branch Knights, who felled the foe
As the lightning lays the oak-tree low!
O my peace, etc.

The warrior Brian [4] of the Fenian race,
In soul and shape all truth and grace,
Whose laws the Princes yet revere,
Who banished the Danes—he too dwelt here.
O, my peace, etc.

[1] For an account of all the other heroes mentioned in the poem, see Keating's history.
[2] Pronounce Even.
[3] Niall of the Nine Hostages (Naoi n Giallaidh), Monarch of Ireland at the close of the fourth century, was one of the most gallant of all the princes of the Ultonian Race. . . . He was killed A.D. 406 during one of his invasions of Gaul. (Note in *Poets and Poetry of Munster.*)
[4] Brian (surnamed) Bourmha = of the Tribute (Brian Boru) became King of Ireland A.D. 1002, and was killed at the battle of Clontarf on April 23, 1014.

Alas! it has pierced my inmost heart,
That Christ allowed our Crown to depart
To men who defile His Holy Word
And scorn the Cross, the Church, the Lord!
O, my peace, etc.

*Ireland in the Seventh Century*

## PRINCE ALFRID'S ITINERARY THROUGH IRELAND

*Translated by* JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

To Ireland, the Land of Saints and Scholars, came many foreign nobles and princes to receive an education not to be had in their own countries. Prince Alfrid, a Saxon prince afterwards King of the Northumbrians, was one of these students, and was in Ireland according to Ven. Bede about the year 684. His original poem, of which this is a translation, is still extant in the Irish language.

I FOUND in Innisfail the fair,
In Ireland, while in exile there,
Women of worth, both grave and gay men,
Many clerics and many lay men.

I travelled its fruitful provinces round,
And in every one of the five[1] I found,
Alike in church and in palace hall,
Abundant apparel, and food for all.

Gold and silver, I found, and money,
Plenty of wheat and plenty of honey;
I found God's people rich in pity,
Found many a feast and many a city.

[1] The two Meaths then formed a distinct province called Meath.

I also found in Armagh [1] the splendid,
Meekness, wisdom, and prudence blended,
Fasting, as Christ hath recommended,
And noble councillors untranscended.

I found in each great church moreo'er,
Whether on island or on shore,
Piety, learning, fond affection,
Holy welcome, and kind protection.

I found the good lay monks and brothers
Ever beseeching help for others,
And in their keeping the holy word
Pure as it came from Jesus the Lord.

I found in Munster unfettered of any,
Kings and Queens, and poets a many—
Poets well skilled in music and measure,
Prosperous doings, mirth and pleasure.

I found in Connaught the just, redundance
Of riches, milk in lavish abundance;
Hospitality, vigour, fame,
In Cruachan's [2] land of heroic name.

I found in the country of Connall [3] the glorious,
Bravest heroes, ever victorious;
Fair-complexioned men and warlike,
Ireland's lights, the high, the starlike!

[1] *Armagh* was one of the greatest of the Irish monastic schools.
[2] *Cruachan* in Roscommon was the site of the royal palace of the Connaught kings.
[3] Connal Carnach, one of the Great Red Branch Champions.

I found in Ulster, from hill to glen,
Hardy warriors, resolute men;
Beauty that bloomed when youth was gone,
And strength transmitted from sire to son.

I found in the noble district of Boyle
(*MS. here illegible*])
Brehon's [1]Erenachs, weapons bright,
And horsemen bold and sudden in fight.

I found in Leinster, the smooth and sleek,
From Dublin to Slewmargy's peak;
Flourishing pastures, valour, health,
Long-living worthies, commerce, wealth.

I found besides, from Ara to Glea,
In the broad rich country of Ossorie,
Sweet fruits, good laws for all and each,
Great chess players, men of truthful speech.

I found in Meath's fair principality,
Virtue, vigour and hospitality;
Candour, joyfulness, bravery, purity,
Ireland's bulwark and security.

I found strict morals in age and youth,
I found historians, recording truth;
The things I sing of, in verse unsmooth
I found them all—I have written sooth.

[1] Brehon, a law judge *Erenach* was a steward of church property, at first a cleric, but in the decay of the Irish monasteries, consequent on the Danish wars, he was frequently a usurping layman.

## 795–1022

## THE DANISH INVASION

By Gerald Griffin

The Danes or Northmen first came to Ireland in 795. They began to attack and plunder the rich monasteries. Later on they sold their services in war to one king against another, and gradually becoming more wealthy and powerful they ousted some of the Irish kings and ruled in their stead.

I

WHY weepest thou, Erin? Why droop thy green bowers?
Why flows all in purple the wave of Cullain?
Why sink the young maidens like rain-laden flowers?
Why hushed are their songs on the desolate plain?
Ruin and sorrow are o'er them spread—
Revel and freedom and mirth are fled.

II

Hath the demon of pestilent airs been out
To taste the sweet breath of thy mountain gales?
To scatter his death-breathing vapours about,
And wave his dark wings o'er thy blooming vales?
Like the wind that mourns in the winter bowers.
Blasting the fairest of health's young flowers?

III

No; poison and pestilence have no share
In the ruin that moulders our strength away—
Happy are those who breathe that air,
And die at the sight of their hope's decay.
But the ocean's breezes fan our skies—
The plague spirit tastes their breath and dies.

IV

But a demon more deadly—the Northman has flown
From his lonely hills—so chilling and grey;
He hath left his rude mountains of heath and stone,
For the fairest that bloom in the light of day—
And Erin has dropp'd her shield and sword,
And wears the yoke of a heathen lord.

V

The blood of the royal—the blood of the brave—
Are blent with the willows of dark Cullain—
Our king is a gay and a gilded slave—
And ours are the ruins that blot the plain.
The Ravens of Denmark are seen on our walls,
And the shout of the spoiler [1] is loud in our halls.

VI

Weep on, then, lost island! thy honours have fled
Like the light on a lake that is troubled and broken;
Thy Snake hath hid his coward head—
The words of thy grief and shame are spoken.
Thou hast not left one lingering light,
To bless with a promise thy cheerless night.

[1] The Danes at first lived by plunder, but they gradually began to found settlements along the coast, especially at Dublin, Waterford and Limerick, and enriched themselves by trade. They continued, however, to plunder the natives and despoil the monasteries.

## 976 *A.D.*

## BRIAN'S LAMENT FOR KING MAHON

By J. C. Mangan

"Those belonging to the princely house of Desmond are known as *Eugenians*, being descended from Owen (Eoghan), the eldest son of Ollill Olum, King of Munster; those belonging to that of Thomond being descended from Cormac Cas, the second son, are named *Dalcassians.*"—*History of Ireland*, Collier. The patrimony of the Dalcassians was Co. Clare. The Dalcassians obtained the upper hand in the time of Brian Boru. In 976 Mahon, Dalcassian King of Munster, was slain by agents of the Molloy, King of Desmond. Mahon had been invited to a friendly conference to Bruree, the residence of Donovan, chief of Hy Fidhgheinte, and had been promised safe conduct. In spite of this he was detained forcibly by Donovan, then sent south to Donovan's confederate Molloy, and murdered on the way at a place called Redchair on the confines of Limerick and Cork.

LAMENT, O Dalcassians! the Eagle of Cashel is dead,
The grandeur, the glory, the joy of her palace is fled;
Your strength in the battle—your bulwark of valour is low!
But the fire of your vengeance will fall on the murderous foe.

His country was mighty—his people were blest in his reign,
But the ray of his glory shall never shine on them again;
Like the beauty of summer his presence gave joy to our souls,
When bards sung his deeds at the banquet of bright golden bowls.

Ye maids of Temora, whose rich garments sweep the green plain!
Ye chiefs of the Sunburst, the terror and scourge of the Dane!
Ye grey-haired *Ard-Fileas*[1] whose songs fire the blood of the brave!
Oh! weep for your Sun-star is quenched in the night of the grave.

He clad you with honours—he filled your high hearts with delight
In the midst of your councils he beamed in his wisdom and might,

[1] Ard Filias, Ard=High, Fili or file=a poet or philosopher.

Gold, silver, and jewels were only as dust in his hand,
But his sword like a lightning flash blasted the foes of his land.

Oh! Mahon, my brother! we've conquer'd and marched side by side,
And thou wert to the love of my soul as a beautiful bride;
In the battle, the banquet, the council, the chase and the throne,
Our beings were blended—our spirits were filled with one tone.

Oh! Mahon, my brother! thou'st died like the hind of the wood.
The hands of assassins were red with thy pure noble blood;
And I was not near, my beloved, when thou wast o erpower'd
To steep in their hearts' blood the steel of my blue-beaming sword.

I stood by the dark misty river at eve dim and grey,
And I heard the death-cry of the spirit of gloomy Craglea;[1]
She repeated thy name in her caoine of desolate woe,
Then I knew that the Beauty and Joy of Clan Tail was laid low.

All day and all night one dark vigil of sorrow I keep,
My spirit is bleeding with wounds that are many and deep;
My banquet is anguish, tears, groaning and wringing of hands,
In madness lamenting my prince of the gold-hilted brands.

O God! give me patience to bear the affliction, I feel,
But for every hot tear a red blood-drop shall blush on my steel;
For every deep pang which my grief-stricken spirit has known,
A thousand death-wounds in the day of revenge shall atone.

[1] The *spirit of gloomy Craglea* was the banshee or woman fairy who watched over the fortunes of the Dalcassian princes. She again announced before the battle of Clontarf that Brian himself was to be killed.

## 1014

# BRIAN BOROIMHE'S MARCH

### OLD BATTLE HYMN

By P J. McCall

One can imagine this battle hymn ringing out from the throats of Brian's twenty thousand men, the flower of Munster, both Dalcassians and Eugenians, on their march to Clontarf. Waiting to engage them was an army composed of Danes with the renegade King of Leinster, Brian s brother-in-law, and his men assisted by warriors from Wales and Cornwall, the Orkneys and Scandinavia. The Danes were commanded by Brodir of Mann and Sigurd, Earl of Orkneys, and by Amrud and Carlus, princes of Denmark.

I

O'ER the Plain of the Flocks from Fingall[1] to Athclee[2]
Roll the hosts of the Gael like the march of the sea;
As the crashing of shells when the winter winds blow,
The smashing of mail when they burst on the foe!
Many a sword, great King of Mumhain![3]
Many a spear, O blithe Amluan!
Many a dart, O gay Donn Cúan!
Shall weep in the wound it will open to-day!
See, dark sprinkles of blood on the gates of the East—
Red Nemon[4] to-night shall have flesh at her feast!
Hear the rattling of ribs in the sea-hollowed cave—
The Death in the Nordlands is digging a grave!
Star after star overcircling Binn Edar
Is lost in the light of a mightier leader;
So the steel shine of the godless invader
Shall sink in our Sunburst's conquering ray!
Brian A-Bu! Brian A-Bu!.
Death to the false, Life to the true!
Eirè go deó![5] Eirè go deó!
And slaughter's red wrath at the heels of the foe!

[1] Fingal is that part of the County of Dublin north of Howth.
[2] Athcliath was the ancient name of Dublin.
[3] Mumhain pronounced Moohan (Munster).
[4] Red Nemon. "Neit," says Cormac's *Glossary*, "was the god of battle with the pagans of the Gael; *Nemon* was his wife." They were malignant beings.
[5] Eirè, go deô = Erin for ever; deô (one syllable) pronounced like the word yeo preceded by a d.

II

String! O Desmond, your bows! Draw, O Thomond, your swords!
Now the fingers of dawn show the heretic hordes!
See the ships of the Raven beached high on the shore
And swear by our Saviour they'll launch them no more!
Form ye the vanguard, brave Dalcassians!
Guard ye the left wing, Teige's Connacians!
Hold ye the right, Eugene's Milesians!
Christ from the Cross will bless ye to-day!
Grip the tall glittering spear of the hazel-white shaft,
Lift the azure-browed axe of the knotted oak haft!
Bend the pliant yew bow, fit the brassy-nailed dart!
Each arrow this morrow must sleep in a heart!
The rats of Athclee be your quarry, Connacians!
Be Laighan's false cravens your prey, ye Milesians!
The steel-feathered Ravens [1] be yours, my Dalcassians,
Whom Morrough will lead thro' the fire o' the fray!
Brian A-Bu! Brian A-Bu!
Death to the false, Life to the true!
Eirè, go deó! Eirè go deó!
And slaughter's red wrath at the heels of the foe!

## BRIAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1014

By William Kenealy

There is a tradition that immediately before the battle of Clontarf began, Brian, mounted on his war horse, addressed his army.

STAND ye now for Erin's glory! Stand ye now for Erin's cause!
Long ye've groaned beneath the rigour of the Northmen's savage laws.

[1] The ensign of these pirate Danes was a dark banner with the figure of a raven.—*Smaller Social Hist. of Ancient Ireland*, Dr. P. W. Joyce.

What though brothers league against us ?[1] What though myriads be the foe ?
Victory will be more honoured in the myriad's overthrow.

Proud Connacians[2] oft we've wrangled in our petty feuds of yore ;
Now we fight against the robber Dane upon our native shore ;
May our hearts unite in friendship, as our blood in one red tide,
While we crush their mail-clad legions, and annihilate their pride !

Brave Eugenians ![3] Erin triumphs in the sights she sees to-day—
Desmond's homesteads all deserted for the muster and the fray !
Cluan's vale and Galtee's summit send their bravest and their best—
May such hearts be theirs for ever, for the Freedom of the West.

Chiefs and Kerne of Dalcassia ! Brothers of my past career,
Oft we've trodden on the pirate flag that flaunts before us here.
You remember Inniscattery,[4] how we bounded on the foe,
As the torrent of the mountain burst upon the plain below !

They have razed our proudest castles—spoiled the Temples of the Lord—
Burnt to dust the sacred relics—put the Peaceful to the sword—

[1] The Lagenians (Leinstermen) under their king Maelmordha, joined the Danes.
[2] Men of Connaught.
[3] See note above, Dalcassians and Eugenians.
[4] The Danes of Limerick sought refuge from Brian in Iniscattery or Scattery Island, but he pursued them there and almost annihilated them.

Desecrated all things holy—as they soon may do again,
If their power to-day we smite not—if to-day we be not men!

Slaughtered pilgrims is the story at St. Kevin's rocky cell,
And on the Southern sea-shore at Isle Helig's[1] holy well;
E'en the anchorites are hunted, poor and peaceful though they be,
And not one of them left living in their caves beside the sea!

Think of all your murdered chieftains—all your rifled homes and shrines—
Then rush down, with whetted vengeance, like fierce wolves upon their lines!
Think of Bangor[2]—think of Mayo—and Senanus' holy tomb—
Think of all your past endurance—what may be your future doom.

On this day the God-man suffered—look upon the sacred sign—
May we conquer 'neath its shadow as of old did Constantine!
May the heathen tribes of Odin fade before it like a dream,
And the triumph of this glorious day in future annals gleam!

God of Heaven, bless our banner—nerve our sinews for the strife!
Fight we now for all that's holy—for our altars, land, and life—
For red vengeance on the spoiler, whom the blazing temples trace—
For the honour of our maidens and the glory of our race!

Should I fall before the foemen 'tis the death I seek to-day,
Should ten thousand daggers pierce me, bear my body not away

[1] Isle Helig or Scellig Island off the coast of Kerry, on which an anchoret lived in the time of the Danes. They captured him and starved him to death.
[2] Bangor was one of the first monasteries ravaged by the Danes, who murdered 900 monks and carried away St. Congall's shrine.

Till this day of days be over—till the field is fought and won—
Then the holy mass be chaunted and the funeral rites be done.

Curses darker than Ben Heder [1] light upon the craven slave
Who prefers the life of traitor to the glory of the grave
Freedom's guerdon now awaits you, or a destiny of chains—
Trample down the dark oppressor while one spark of life remains!

Think not now of coward mercy—Heaven's curse is on their blood!
Spare them not though myriad corses float upon the purple flood!
By the memory of great Dathi and the valiant chiefs of yore,
This day we'll scourge the viper brood for ever from our shore!

Men of Erin! Men of Erin! grasp the battle-axe and spear!
Chase these northern wolves before you like a herd of frightened deer!
Burst their ranks, like bolts from heaven! Down on the heathen crew.
For the glory of the Crucified, and Erin's glory too!

## KING MALACHI

### A BARD SONG

### By Aubrey de Vere

Malachi was a great-hearted and truly patriotic prince. For the good of Erin he humbled himself and submitted to the usurpation of his rival Brian, even fighting under him in battle.

'TWAS a holy time when the Kings, long foemen,
Fought side by side to uplift the serf;
Never triumphed in old time Greek or Roman
As Brian and Malachi at Clontarf.

[1] Now called the Hill of Howth.

There was peace in Eire for long years after:
Canute in England reigned and Sweyn;
But Eire found rest, and the freeman's laughter
Rang out the knell of the vanquishèd Dane.

Praise to the King of eighty years
Who rode round the battle-field, cross in hand
But the blessing of Eire and grateful tears
To the King who fought under Brian's command!
A crown in heaven for the King who brake,
To staunch old discords, his royal wand:
Who spurned his throne for his People's sake,
Who served a rival and saved the land!

## 1015

## LAMENT OF MAC LIAG FOR KINCORA

*Translated by* J. C. MANGAN

"Brian's chief strength was a great fortress on the bank of the Shannon at the lower end of Lough Derg and just above the place where the Shannon becomes loud and white as it roars over the rapids at Killaloe. The name of this great fortress was *Kincora.*"—*The Story of Ireland,* by Standish O'Grady. Brian was treacherously slain in his tent by Brodir, a Dane, after the victory of Clontarf. Mac Liag, his secretary,[1] who loved him dearly, laments in the following poem the desolation of Brian's home.

OH! where Kincora! is Brian the Great?
And where is the beauty that once was thine?
Oh, where are the princes and nobles that sate
At the feast in thy halls, and drank the red wine?
Where, oh, Kincora?

Oh, where Kincora! are thy valorous lords?
Oh, whither, thou Hospitable! are they gone?
Oh, where are the Dalcassians[1] of the golden swords?
And where are the warriors Brian led on?
Where, oh, Kincora?

[1] *Macliag* was author of a well-known work, *The Wars of the Gael and Gall.*

And where is Morrogh,[1] the descendant of kings?
The defeater of a hundred—the daringly brave—
Who set but slight store by jewels and rings—
Who swam down the torrent and laugh'd at its wave?
Where, oh, Kincora?

And where is Donogh, King Brian's worthy son?
And where is Conaing the beautiful chief?
And Kian and Core? Alas! they are gone—
They have left me this night alone with my grief!
Left me, Kincora!

And where are the chiefs with whom Brian went forth,
The ne'er vanquished sons of Erin the brave,
The great King of Onaght, renowned for his worth
And the hosts of Baskinn[2] from the western wave?
Where, oh, Kincora?

Oh, where is Duolann of the Swift-footed Steeds?
And where is Kian, who was son of Molloy?
And where is King Lonergan, the fame of whose deeds
In the red battle-field no time can destroy?
Where, oh, Kincora?

And where is that youth of majestic height,
The faith-keeping Prince of the Scots? Even he,
As wide as his fame was, as great as was his might,
Was tributary, oh Kincora, to thee!
Thee, oh, Kincora!

They are gone, those heroes of royal birth,
Who plundered no churches, and broke no trust;
'Tis weary for me to be living on earth
When they, oh Kincora, lie low in the dust!
Low, oh, Kincora!

[1] Murrogh was the eldest son of Brian, and was killed at Clontarf.
[2] *Baskin* or Corcabascin in the west of Clare.

Oh, never again will Princes appear
To rival the Dalcassians of the Cleaving Swords.
I can never dream of meeting, afar or anear,
In the east or the west, such heroes and lords!
Never, Kincora!

Oh, dear are the images my memory calls up
Of Brian Boru!—how he never would miss
To give me at the banquet, the first bright cup!
Ah! why did he heap on me honour like this?
Why, oh, Kincora?

I am Mac Liag, and my home is on the Lake;
Thither often to that place whose beauty is fled,
Came Brian, to ask me, and I went for his sake,
Oh, my grief! that I should live, and Brian be dead.
Dead, oh, Kincora!

## BRIAN THE BRAVE

By Thomas Moore

REMEMBER the glories of Brian the brave,
Tho' the days of the hero are o'er;
Tho' lost to Mononia[1] and cold in the grave,
He returns to Kinkora no more.
That star of the field which so often hath pour'd
Its beam on the battle, is set;
But enough of its glory remains on each sword,
To light us to victory yet.

Mononia! when Nature embellish'd the tint
Of thy fields and thy mountains so fair
Did she ever intend that a tyrant should print
The footstep of slavery there?

[1] Mononia. Munster.

No! Freedom whose smile we shal never resign,
Go, tell our invaders, the Danes,
That 'tis sweeter to bleed for an age at thy shrine
Than to sleep but a moment in chains.

Forget not our wounded companions[1] who stood
In the day of distress by our side;
While the moss of the valley grew red with their blood,
They stirr'd not, but conquer'd and died.
That sun which now blesses our arms with his light,
Saw them fall upon Ossory's plain;—
Oh let him not blush when he leaves us to-night,
To find that they fell there in vain.

*King Malachy II*, 980–1002 *and* 1014–1022

## LET ERIN REMEMBER

By Thomas Moore

King Malachy II was Ard-Ri of Erin from A.D. 980 to 1002, when he resigned in favour of Brian Borunhe. After Brian's death in 1014 he resumed the monarchy, and reigned until he died in 1022.

LET Erin remember the days of old,
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her;
When Malachi wore the collar of gold[2]
Which he won from her proud invader;
When her kings with standard of green unfurled
Led the Red Branch Knights to danger;
Ere the emerald gem of the western world
Was set in the crown of a stranger

[1] On their return from the battle of Clontarf the Dalcassians were intercepted by the enemy, and the wounded, of whom there were many, begged to be tied to stakes that they might fight to their last breath instead of being a burden to their comrades.

[2] In 980 Malachy, fighting with the Danes of Dublin, slew a chieftain Tomar, and took his "torc" or collar of gold.—*Hist. of Ireland*, Collier.

## *A.D.* 1152

## THE SONG OF O'RUARK, PRINCE OF BREFFNI

By Thomas Moore

In 1152, while O'Ruark, Prince of Breffni, was away from home on a pilgrimage, Mac Murchad, King of Leinster, came to his castle and stole away Devorgilla, his wife, daughter of the King of Meath. This incident may be taken as the direct cause of the Norman Invasion of Ireland; for Mac Murchad, finding Irish public opinion—in the shape of the sharp swords and spears of his countrymen—against him, fled to England to obtain help from Henry II against Roderic (or Rory) O'Connor, the last Ard-Ri of Ireland.

THE valley lay smiling before me,
Where lately I left her behind;
Yet I trembled and something hung o'er me
That saddened the joy of my mind.
I looked for the lamp which, she told me,
Should shine when her pilgrim returned;
But though darkness began to enfold me,
No lamp from the battlements burned.

I flew to her chamber—'twas lonely,
As if the lov'd tenant lay dead;—
Ah! would it were death and death only!
But no, the young false one had fled.
And there hung the lute that could soften
My very worst pains into bliss,
While the hand that had waked it so often
Now throbbed to a proud rival's kiss.

There *was* a time, falsest of women!
When Breffni's good sword would have sought
That man, through a million of foemen
Who dared but to wrong thee *in thought!*
While now—O degenerate daughter
Of Erin, how fallen is thy fame!
And through ages of bondage and slaughter,
Our country shall bleed for thy shame.

Already the curse is upon her
And strangers her valleys profane;
They come to divide—to dishonour,
And tyrants they long will remain.
But onward!—the green banner rearing,
Go, flesh every sword to the hilt;
On *our* side is Virtue and Erin,
On *theirs* is the Saxon and Guilt.

# THE SECOND PERIOD

## FROM RURIE O'CONNOR, LAST ARD-RI OF IRELAND, TO GERALD, EARL OF KILDARE, LORD DEPUTY 1166 TO 1478

# THE SECOND PERIOD

*From Rurie O'Connor, last Ard-Ri of Ireland, to Gerald, Earl of Kildare, Lord Deputy* 1166 *to* 1478

## THE FAITHFUL NORMAN

### By Aubrey de Vere

"They were a very noble, valiant, loyal and knightly race of men, these Norman gentlemen of South Wales."—*Story of Ireland*, by Standish O'Grady.
*The Faithful Norman* was Maurice de Prendergast, one of the first of those who came to Ireland. He had been sent to bring the chief of Ossory to a friendly conference to the camp of Strongbow, and having done so and finding that treachery was intended, he swore by the cross on his sword that whoever laid violent hands on the Ossory chief would have to answer for it. And he insisted on accompanying the Irish chief back to his own people, conduct which was so much esteemed by the Irish, and so much at variance with what they had seen in the case of other Normans, that they ever afterwards called Prendergast the faithful Norman (Rev. Father Dalton).

PRAISE to the valiant and faithful foe!
Give us noble foes not the friend who lies!
We dread the drugged cup, not the open blow:
We dread the old hate in the new disguise.

To Ossory's king they had pledged their word:
He stood in their camp and their pledge they broke;
Then Maurice the Norman upraised his sword;
The cross on its hilt he kissed and spoke:

"So long as this sword or this arm hath might
I swear by the cross which is lord of all,
By the faith and honour of noble and knight
Who touches you, Prince, by this hand shall fall."

So side by side through the throng they pass'd
And Eire gave praise to the just and true.
Brave foe! the past truth heals at last:
There is room in the great heart of Eire for you!

## *A.D* 1190

## THE MUNSTER WAR SONG

### By Richard D'Alton Williams

"Among the chiefs who agreed, at this crisis, to postpone their mutual feuds and act in concert against the enemy, were O Brian of Thomond and MacCarthy of Desmond, hereditary rulers of North and South Munster, and chiefs respectively of the two rival tribes, the Dalcassians and Eugenians (see note above to Brian's Lament for King Mahon). By a truce now formed between these Princes O'Brian was left free to direct his arms against the English, and having attacked their forces at Thurles in Fogarty's country gave them *a complete overthrow*, putting to the sword, add the Munster annals, a great number of knights."—*Moore's History of Ireland.* The union, however, did not last long.

CAN the depths of the ocean afford you not graves,
That you come thus to perish afar o er the waves—
To redden and swell the wild torrents that flow
Through the valley of vengeance, the dark Aharlow?[1]

The clangour of conflict o'erburthens the breeze
From the stormy Shabh Bloom to the stately Gailtees;
Your caverns and torrents are purple with gore,
Sliavenamon, Gleaun Colaich and sublime Gailtee Mor!

The sunburst that slumbered, embalmed in our tears,
Tipperary! shall wave o'er thy tall mountaineers!
And the dark hill shall bristle with sabre and spear,
While one tyrant remains to forge manacles here.

The riderless war-steed careers o'er the plain
With a shaft in his flank and a blood-dripping mane.
His gallant breast labours, and glare his wild eyes!
He plunges in torture—falls—shivers—and dies.

[1] Aharlow Glen, County Tipperary.

Let the trumpets ring triumph! the tyrant is slain!
He reels o'er his charger deep-pierced through the brain;
And his myriads are flying like leaves on the gale—
But who shall escape from our hills with the tale?

For the arrows of vengeance are show'ring like rain,
And choke the strong rivers with islands of slain,
Till thy waves, "lordly Shannon," all crimsonly flow,
Like billows of hell with the blood of the foe.

Ay! the foemen are flying, but vainly they fly—
Revenge with the fleetness of lightning can vie;
And the septs of the mountains spring up from each rock,
And rush down the ravines like wolves on the flock.

And who shall pass over the stormy Sliabh Bloom,
To tell the pale Saxon of tyranny's doom,
When, like tigers from ambush, our fierce mountaineers
Leap along from the crags with their death-dealing spears?

They came with high boasting to bind us as slaves;
But the glen and the torrent have yawned for their graves:
From the gloomy Ard-Finan to wild Templemore,
From the Suir to the Shannon—is red with their gore.

By the soul of Heremon! our warriors may smile,
To remember the march of the foe through our isle;
Their banners and harness were costly and gay,
And proud'y they flashed in the summer sun's ray;

The hilts of their fa'chions were crusted with gold,
And the gems of their helmets were bright to behold;
By St. Bride of Kildare! but they moved in fair show
To gorge the young eagles of dark Aharlow.

## A VISION OF CONNAUGHT IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

By J. C. Mangan

Cahal Mor O'Connor, half-brother of Rory (Ruary=Roderick), was one of the greatest of Erin's petty kings. He was a mighty warrior, and defeated the Normans in many battles, the most important being the battle of Knockmoy, in Galway. In his reign, too, the arts of peace flourished, and in the ruins of the monastery of Knockmoy, which Cahal founded, are to be seen many beautiful carvings and frescoes. In 1223 he resigned the crown of Connaught to his son Hugh and retired to this monastery, where he died two years later. The Norman power began to revive as soon as this strong spirit lost its influence.

I WALKED entranced
Through a land of Morn;
The sun, with wondrous access of light,
Shone down and glanced
Over seas of corn
And lustrous gardens on left and right.

Even in the clime
Of resplendent Spain,
Beams no such sun upon such a land;
But it was the time,
'Twas in the reign
Of Cahal Mor of the Wine-red Hand.

Anon stood nigh
By my side a man
Of princely aspect and port sublime.
Him, queried I,
"O, my lord and Khan,[1]
What clime is this and what golden time?"
When he—"The clime
Is a clime to praise,
The clime is Erin's, the green and bland;
And it is the time,
These be the days
Of Cáhal Mor of the Wine-red Hand!"

[1] Ceann, the Gaelic title for a chief.



JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

Then I saw thrones
And circling fires.
And a Dome rose near me as by a spell,
Whence flowed the tones
Of silver lyres
And many voices in wreathèd swell;
And their thrilling chime
Fell on mine ears
As the heavenly hymn of an angel-band—
"It is now the time,
These be the years
Of Cáhal Mor of the Wine-red Hand!"

I sought the hall
And behold! . . . a change
From light to darkness, from joy to woe!
King, nobles, all,
Looked aghast and strange;
The minstrel-group sat in dumbest show!
Had some great crime
Wrought this dread amaze,
This terror? None seemed to understand!
'Twas then the time,
We were in the days
Of Cáhal Mor of the Wine-red Hand.

I again walked forth;
But lo! the sky
Showed fleckt with blood, and an alien sun
Glared from the north,
And there stood on high
Amid his shorn beams, *a skeleton*!
It was by the stream
Of the castled Maine,

One Autumn eve in the Teuton's land
That I dreamed this dream
Of the time and reign
Of Cáhal Mor of the Wine-red Hand!

## *A.D.* 1316

## THE DIRGE OF ATHUNREE

### By A. de Vere

"In 1315, during the reign in England of Edward II, Edward Bruce landed in Ireland with 6,000 Scots. "He was at once joined by the Irish of the north, and, presently, by Fedlim O'Connor, King of Connaught. . . . O'Brian of Thomond rose, and the chiefs of Munster and Meath . . . and many of the Anglo-Irish settlers threw in their lot with the Irish, and Edward Bruce was crowned at Dundalk."—*Kingdom of Ireland*, C. G. Walpole. The battle of Athenry was fought in the following year, 1316. On one side were the old Irish under Fedlim, chief of the O'Connors, who was in alliance with Edward Bruce, and on the other the Anglo-Irish under Birmingham. The Irish were far more numerous, but they fought in their saffron shirts, while the Anglo-Irish were clothed in mail. The result was a crushing defeat for the Irish. O'Connor himself and most of his family fell, and scarce a Connaught clan but had to mourn the loss of some of their chiefs, and in many cases all of them were swept away. The battle, however, did not end the war between the English and Irish, as the poet supposes.

I

ATHUNREE! Athunree,
Erin's crown, it fell on thee!
Ne'er till then in all its woe
Did her heart its hope forego.
Save a little child—but one—
The latest regal race is gone.
Roderick died again on thee,
Athunree!

II

Athunree! Athunree!
A hundred years and forty-three
Winter-wing'd and black as night
O'er the land had track'd their flight:

In Clonmacnoise from earthy bed
Roderick raised once more his head :—
Fedlim floodlike rushed to thee,
Athunree !

III

Athunree ! Athunree !
The light that struggled sank on thee !
Ne'er since Cathall the red-handed
Such a host till then was banded.
Long-haired Kerne and Gallowglass
Met the Norman face to face ;
The saffron standard floated far
O'er the on-rolling wave of war ;
Bards the onset sang on thee,
Athunree !

IV

Athunree ! Athunree !
The poison tree took root in thee !
What might naked breasts avail
'Gainst sharp spear and steel-ribbed mail ?
Of our Princes twenty-nine,
Bulwarks fair of Connor's line,
Of our clansmen thousands ten
Slept on thy red ridges. Then
Then the night came down on thee,
Athunree !

V

Athunree ! Athunree !
Strangely shone that moon on thee !
Like the lamp of them that tread
Staggering o'er the heaps of dead,

Seeking that they fear to see.
O that widow's wailing sore!
On it rang to Oranmore;
Died, they say, among the piles
That make holy Aran's isles;—
It was Erin wept on thee,
Athunree!

VI

Athunree! Athunree!
The sword of Erin brake on thee!
Thrice a hundred wounded men,
Slowly nursed in wood or glen,
When the tidings came of thee
Rushed in madness to the sea;
Hurled their swords into the waves,
Raving died in ocean caves:—
Would that they had died on thee,
Athunree!

VII

Athunree! Athunree!
The heart of Erin burst on thee!
Since that hour some unseen hand
On her forehead stamps the brand:
Her children ate that hour the fruit
That slays manhood at the root;
Our warriors are not what they were;
Our maids no more are blithe and fair;
Truth and Honour died with thee,
Athunree.

VIII

Athunree! Athunree!
Never harvest wave o'er thee!

Never sweetly-breathing kine
Pant o'er golden meads of thine!
Barren be thou as the tomb;
May the night-bird haunt thy gloom,
And the wailer from the sea,
Athunree.

IX

Athunree! Athunree!
All my heart is sore for thee,
It was Erin died on thee,
Athunree.

## *A.D.* 1318

## THE DIRGE OF EDWARD BRUCE

By Aubrey de Vere

During the reigns of John, Henry III and Edward I, the Anglo-Normans had been settling in Ireland in ever-increasing numbers. They had founded monasteries and in many cases intermarried with the natives, but the mass of the old Irish they robbed and plundered without mercy. They seized their lands, destroyed or appropriated their churches, excluded the Irish from their monasteries, scoffed at the Brehon law, and refused to give the old Irish the status of English subjects or the protection of English law. Repeatedly the oppressed Irish had asked for protection from the English king; but the English king was too much engaged with events at home, and his viceroy at Dublin was too weak to curb the rapacity of the Anglo-Norman lords. Then, as the Irish themselves could not unite, Domhnall O'Neill of Ulster sent his well-known Remonstrance to the Pope, recapitulating all that the Irish had suffered, and informing his Holiness that they had invited over Edward Bruce, brother of King Robert of Scotland. Bruce came in 1315, and was crowned King of Ireland at Dundalk the following year. At first successful, he was ultimately defeated in 1318 at Faugart in Louth.

I

HE is dead, dead, dead!—
The man to Erin dear!
The King who gave our Isle a head—
His kingdom is his bier.
He rode into our war;
And we crown'd him chief and prince,

For his race to Abba's shore
Sailed from Erin ages since.
Woe, woe, woe!
Edward Bruce is cold to-day;
He that slew him lies as low,
Sword to sword and clay to clay.

II

King Robert came too late!—
Long, long may Erin mourn!
Famine's rage and dreadful Fate
Forbade her Bannockburn!
As the galley touch'd the strand
Came the messenger of woe;
The King put back the herald's hand—
"Peace," he said, "thy tale I know!
His face was in the Cloud;
And his wraith was on the surge."—
Maids of Alba, weave his shroud!
Maids of Erin, sing his dirge!

## 1367

## THE STATUTE OF KILKENNY

### By Aubrey de Vere

The Statute of Kilkenny "enacted that intermarriages with the natives, or any connexion with them *as fosterers or in the way of gossipred* should be punished as high treason; that the use of their name, language, apparel, or customs should be punished with the forfeiture of lands and tenements; that to submit to be governed by the Brehon laws was treason; that the English should not make war upon the natives without the permission or authority of government; that the English should not permit the Irish to graze upon their lands; that they should not admit them to any benefice or religious privilege, or even entertain their bards."—Plowden.

OF old ye warr'd on men: to-day
Cn women and on babes ye war;
The noble's child his head must lay
Beneath the peasant's roof no more!

I saw in sleep the infant's hand
His foster-brother's fiercely grasp;
His warm arm like as willow-wand,
Twines me each day with closer clasp!

O infant smiler! grief-beguiler!
Between the oppressor and the oppress'd,
O soft unconscious reconciler,
Smile on! through thee the Land is bless'd.

Through thee the puissant love the poor;
His conqueror's hope the vanquish'd shares:
For thy sake by a lowly door
The clan made vassal stops and stares.

Our vales are healthy. On thy cheek
There dawns each day a livelier red:
Smile on! Before another week
Thy feet our earthen floor will tread.

Thy foster-brothers twain for thee
Would face the wolves on snowy fell:
Smile on! the "Irish enemy"
Will fence their Norman nursling well.

The nursling as the child is dear;—
Thy mother loves not like thy nurse!
That babbling mandate steps not near
Thy cot but o'er her bleeding corse!

In justice to the English, it is but fair to say that these cruel laws were not very rigidly enforced. And it is an honour to the Irish that, as the poem tells, they had little intention of conforming to them. But they were not without their evil effects, as will be seen.

## *A.D.* 1399

# THE TRUE KING

### A BARD SONG

### By Aubrey de Vere

The Statute of Kilkenny freshly stirred up Irish discontent, and the great tribes were surging angrily when in 1399 Richard II arrived in Waterford harbour with 30,000 archers and 4,000 men at arms. He intended by this display of force to show the chieftains the uselessness of opposing him. Some few were overawed and submitted, but Art MacMurrogh, Prince of Leinster (descended from Donal, son of Dermot [Diarmid], of evil fame), opposed him and Richard soon returned to England. The most heroic figure of his age, Art spent his lifetime at war with the English, and died at New Ross in 1417.

I

HE [1] came in the night on a false pretence;
As a friend he came; as a lord remains:
His coming we noted not—when—or whence.
We slept: we woke in chains.
Ere a year they had chased us to dens and caves;
Our streets and our churches lay drown'd in blood,
The race that had sold us their sons as slaves
In our land as conquerors stood.

II

Who were they, those princes that gave away
What was theirs to keep, not theirs to give?
A king holds sway for a passing day;
The kingdoms for ever live!
The tanist [2] succeeds when the king is dust:
The king rules all; yet the king hath naught:
They were traitors not kings who sold their trust;
They were traitors not kings who bought!

[1] Richard II on his first coming in 1394.
[2] Tanistry was a mode of tenure that prevailed among various Celtic tribes, according to which the tanist or holder of honours and lands held them only for life, and his successor was fixed by election (dictionary).

III

Brave Art Mac Murrough !—Arise, 'tis morn !
For a true king the nation hath waited long,
He is strong as the horn of the unicorn,
This true king who rights our wrong !
He rules in the fight by an inward right ;
From the heart of the nation her king is grown ;
He rules by right ; he is might of her might ;
Her flesh and bone of her bone !

## 1420

## THE DESMOND

### By Thomas Moore

Thomas, sixth Earl of Desmond, loved and married Catherine MacCormac, the daughter of one of his dependants. He first saw her and was struck by her beauty, when taking shelter in her father's house near the Abbey of Feale, after a hunt. The young Earl's family considered themselves insulted by his marriage, and made his life so unhappy in Ireland that he retired to Normandy, where he died in 1420. His uncle Thomas succeeded to his estates.

BY the Feal's wave benighted, no star in the skies,
To thy door by Love lighted, I first saw those eyes.
Some voice whispered o'er me as the threshold I crossed—
There was ruin before me, if I lov'd, I was lost.

Love came, and brought sorrow too soon in his train ;
Yet so sweet that to-morrow twere welcome again.
Though misery's full measure my portion should be,
I would drain it with pleasure if pour'd out by thee.

You, who call it dishonour to bow to this flame,
If you've eyes, look but on her, and blush while you blame.
Hath the pearl less whiteness because of its birth ?
Hath the violet less brightness for growing near earth ?

No—Man for his glory to ancestry flies,
But women's bright story is told in her eyes;
While the Monarch but traces through mortals his line,
Beauty, born of the Graces, ranks next to Divine!

# THE THIRD PERIOD

## FROM GERALD, EARL OF KILDARE, AS LORD DEPUTY, TO THE FLIGHT OF THE EARLS. 1478 TO 1607

# THE THIRD PERIOD

## *From Gerald, Earl of Kildare, as Lord Deputy, to the Flight of the Earls.* 1478 *to* 1607

## PANEGYRIC OF BLACK THOMAS BUTLER

### EARL OF ORMOND, BETWEEN THE REIGNS OF HENRY VIII AND ELIZABETH

### *From the Irish*

### By J. C. Mangan

One of the last acts of Edward IV with regard to Ireland was to make Gerald, the eighth Earl of Kildare, Lord Deputy. Gerald retained this office for fourteen years, from 1478 to 1492.

At this time the Wars of the Roses were raging in England, and the English had very little power in Ireland; the Pale, indeed, was reduced to a single county. In 1494 Sir Edward Poynings was sent over as Lord Deputy, with orders to crush the adherents of Perkin Warbeck a (pretender to the English crown, who gained much support in Ireland), and to reform the Parliament. The Earls of Ormonde and Kildare joined him; he subdued the chiefs of Ulster, and summoned a Parliament at Drogheda. Acts were passed to the effect "that no future parliament was to be held in Ireland until (1) the Lord Lieutenant and Council had certified to the King the causes and considerations of and the acts to be brought before such an assembly, and (2) until these had been approved under the Great Seal of England."—(Collier.) The Earl of Kildare was now sent to England as a prisoner, and attainted of high treason. But King Henry was too wise to condemn the great Earl. The King had a pretty wit, and the courage to indulge it. "All Ireland," he cried to Kildare's accusers, "all Ireland ye say cannot rule this man, then let him rule all Ireland." And the Earl was forthwith reinstated as Lord Deputy in 1496, and was the King's faithful lieutenant as long as his rule lasted, viz. to 1513. It was he who fought and won the battle of Knockare in 1504. A few years of peace followed. But Henry VIII, when he came to the throne did not leave Ireland in peace as his predecessor had done. Fearing the power of the Geraldines, he summoned Gerald, the ninth Earl of Kildare, to London, on a false and flimsy charge of treason. Gerald left his son Thomas to act as deputy in his absence. This gallant youth, hearing an exaggerated story of his father's wrongs, impetuously renounced his allegiance to the English crown and rose in rebellion. Hot-headed and thoughtless as he was, Silken Thomas yet succeeded in defying the government for two years. But at length he was betrayed by his foster brother. Parez and his stronghold of Maynooth was taken by the English general, Sir William Skeffington. Skeffington shewed his contempt for the traitor by hanging him.

Thomas and his five uncles were treacherously taken prisoners, in face of a direct promise that they would not be harmed, sent to London, and executed. The poor old Earl Gerald died of a broken heart in his London prison.

His Irish wife succeeded in concealing her little son, a boy of ten or twelve, who was afterwards sent to Rome, where he was educated.

This Earl of Ormond was prominent throughout the whole reign of Elizabeth

and died in 1614, in extreme old age. Few who know anything of the history of the time will deny that he was an able man. But it is difficult, especially for an Irish Catholic, to agree with the praises of the poet; for Ormond was a Protestant and a bigot, a supporter of Elizabeth in all her cruelties, and it was he who was largely responsible for the desolation of Munster during the Desmond wars.

STRIKE the loud lyre for Dark Thomas, the Roman,[1]
Roman in Faith, but Hibernian in soul!
Him who, the idol of warrior and woman,
Never feared peril and never knew dole.
Who is the man whom I name with such rapture?
Who but our Ossory's and Ormond's great Chief—
He whom his foes battled vainly to capture—
He whom his friends loved beyond all belief!

Him the great Henry[2] gave rubies and rings to—
Him the King Edward for fleetness admired;
Even as his body, his spirit had wings, too,
And defied efforts that Death alone tired.
Southward this morn into deep Tipperary,
Northward ere night on the shores of the Erne,
Always he showed his contempt of those chary
Shifts of the soul that no BUTLER could learn!

Oriel of streams, and Duhallow of Harbours,
Yielded him shorewards their silver and gold—[3]
All he despised!—as those greenwoods and arbours
Girdling his towers from the ages of old.
Riches he loved not—his trust and his treasure
Lay in the might of his far-flaming sword;
War was his pastime and battle his pleasure,
And his own glory the God he adored!

Thrice and a fourth time, he humbled Clan Caura;[4]
His were the warriors that wasted Dunlo—
How his bands ravaged and fired Glen-na-Maura,
Who throughout green Inisfail doth not know?

[1] Thomas the Roman is wrong, for Ormond was a Protestant.
[2] Henry VIII. [3] Their white and yellow fish. [4] The MacCarthies.

Munster beheld his achievements of wonder,
Connaught and Ulster his bands left bereaven;
Wrath, like the wrath of his lightning and thunder
Cast into shade the high anger of Heaven!

Woe unto us! This great man has departed!
Quenched lies his lamp in the dust of the tomb!
He, the land's giant, the great Lion-hearted!
He, even he, hath succumbed unto Doom!
Rest is his lot for whom Life yielded no rest—
Darkling and lone is his dwelling to-night—
On the proud thousand-yeared oak of the Forest
Hath on a sudden come blastment and blight!

Toll ye his funeral dirge, ye dark waters,
O'er which so often his fleets held their march!
Mourn for the Earl, thou Tërnà of Slaughters;
Build up his pillar and laurel his arch!
Thy foes were his, and with them he warred only—
Weep for him, then, from the depths of thy core!
Weep for the Chief who hath left thee thus lonely—
One like to him thou shalt never see more!

Oh! for myself my two eyes are as fountains—
Flowing, o'erflowing, by night and by morn
Gloomily roam I on Banba's grey mountains,
Feeling all wretched, all stricken and lorn.
Jewels and gold in profusion he gave me—
Would they, not he, were now under the sod!
I shall soon follow him; these cannot save me—
Death is my guerdon, but, Glory to God!

Glory to God in the Highest—and Lowest!
His are the Power and the Glory alone—
Pay Him, O, Man, the high homage thou owest
Whether thou rest on a footstool or throne!

Yet may his glory be mirrored in others—
As in the waves the rich poop of the bark;
And the mean man stands apart from his brothers,
Who doth not trace it in Thomas the Dark.

## THE REPLY OF SHANE THE PROUD, PRINCE OF TIR-EOGHAIN

By Ethné.

The Queen (Elizabeth) directed Sydney, her Deputy in Ireland, to reduce O'Neill either by kindness or by force. She even offered Shane the title of Earl of Tyrowen. Shane received the proposal with haughtiness expressive of his contempt for English titles of honour as compared with the name of O'Neill.

I SCORN your Lady's honours—I scorn her titles vain,
A Prince am I of high degree and of a fair domain;
Peace have I never craved of her, but ever she from me;
I am a king in kingly right, and hold my kingdom free.

Heremon's blood is in my veins—I feel it swelling high,
And Eoghain's, of the iron arm, and of the flashing eye;
Their forms are melted into dust—their spirit is not gone.
I owe no fealty to your Queen, and I will yield her none.

She boasts her ancient Norman line, but tell me can she trace
A pedigree as long and proud as of my royal race?
And can she dream that I would stand among her modern peers,
Whose sires were princes in the land for twice a thousand years?

What, though indeed at last arose a traitor to his line,
(Alas the day!—that I should name the recreant sire of mine![1])

[1] *The recreant sire of mine* was Conn O'Neill (Shane's father), the first Earl of Tyrone.

My trusty glaive has gained again the rights of Cinel-Eoghain,
And by its flash will I maintain my kingdom of Tir-Eoghain.

Go, tell her, tho' MacCarty Mor has bent him like a churl,
And risen from beneath her hand, a belted English Earl;
That Shane the Proud is prouder far, and not for England's crown
Would he exchange the name O'Neill, or lay its honours down.

Say that ye found him all prepared for peace, or for the fray,
Standing upon his native hill, as stern, as free as they;
And that, were all the rest her slaves, there would he stand alone,
Defying from their rocky crests, the foemen of Tyrone.

## 1567

## SHANE O'NEILL

### *Assassinated A.D.* 1567

### By Seamus Mac Manus

Shane's was a wild and stormy life, and ended, not unfitly, in assassination. His war with Elizabeth in his earlier years was a worthy one, for he so sturdily defended his faith and his country that the Queen decided to leave him alone. But his nature was passionate and turbulent, and he quarrelled with all the neighbouring chiefs. He ran away with the wife of the Chief of the O'Donnels, and that clan, some years later, defeated him in battle. He sought refuge with the Scotch MacDonalds, but he had always treated them with such pride and scorn that he could expect little help at their hands. And he got little. He was assassinated by a Scot in 1567 and his head was sent to Dublin and exposed on a pike on the walls of Dublin Castle.

ON thy wild and windy upland, Tornamona,
High above the tossing Moyle
Lies in slumber deep and dreamless now a warrior
Weary worn with battle-toil.

On his mighty breast the little Canna blossom
And the scented bog-bines trail,
While the winds from Lurigaiden whisper hush-songs
Round the bed of Shane O'Neill.

Time was once, O haughty warrior, when you slept not
To the crooning of the wind;
There was once a Shane whom daisies could not smother
And whom bog weeds could not bind—
Once a Shane with death shafts from his fierce eye flashing,
With dismay in fist of mail—
Shane whose throbbing pulses sang with singing lightning—
Shane, our Shane, proud Shane O'Neill!

Him the hungry Scot knew and the thieving Saxon,
Traitorous Eireannach as well,
For their mailed throats often gurgled in his grasping
As he hurled their souls to Hell.
Sassenach now, and flouting Scot and Irish traitor
Breathe his name and turn not pale.
Set their heel upon the warrior's breast, nor tremble—
God! the breast of Shane O'Neill!

Will you never, O, our chieftain snap the sleep cords?
Never rise in thunderous wrath
Through the knaves and slaves that bring a blight to westward,
Sweeping far a dread red swath.
O'er the surges shout, O you on Tornamona,
Hark the soul shout of the Gael.
Rise, O Chief, and lead us from our bitter bondage,
Rise, in God's name, Shane O'Neill!

*A.D.* 1574

## THE BETRAYAL OF CLANNABUIDHE

(*Belfast Castle, November*, 1574)

By Ethna Carbery

Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, to whom Elizabeth made a grant of half the county of Antrim and the barony of Farney in Monaghan came to Ireland and endeavoured to effectually occupy the territory given him. Repeatedly harassed by the Scots and by the O'Neills of Clanaboy, he retaliated by committing murder, killing on a large scale. Then he made peace with Brian O'Neill, and accepted that chief's invitation to a feast. He came in apparent friendship, with a large retinue, and after the feast he and his followers basely set upon O'Neill's attendants whom they killed to the number of 200. O'Neill himself, with his wife, Essex sent prisoners to Dublin, where they were executed.

FROM Brian O'Neill in his northern home
Went swiftly a panting vassal,
Bidding the lord of Essex come
To a feast in his forded castle,
To a friendly feast where the gleaming foam
Of the wine-cup crowned the wassail.

To Brian O'Neill came his gentle wife,
And wild were her eyes of warning;
"A banquet-chamber of blood and strife
I dreamt of 'twixt night and morning,
And a voice that keened for a chieftain's life——"
But he laughed, as he kissed her scorning.

"In peace have I bidden the strangers here,
And not to the note of battle;
My flagons await them with bubbling cheer,
I have slaughtered my choicest cattle;
And sweetest of harpings shall greet thine ear,
*A rúin!* o'er the goblets' rattle."

In pride he hath entered his banquet hall,
Unwitting what may betide him,
Girded round by his clansmen tall,
And his lady fair beside him;
From his lips sweet snatches of music fall,
And none hath the heart to chide him.

Hath he forgotten his trust betrayed
In the bitterest hour of trial?
Hath he forgotten his prayer half-stayed
At the Viceroy's grim denial?
And the bloody track of the Saxon raid
On the fertile lands of Niall?

Essex hath coveted Massareene,
And Toome by the Bann's wide border,
Edendhucarrig's dark towers—the scene
Of hard-won fights' disorder;
And Castlereagh, set in a maze of green
Tall trees like a watchful warder.

Brian O'Neill he hath gazed adown
Where the small waves one by one met
The sward that sloped from the hill-tops thrown
Dusky against the sunset;
Sighed in his soul for his lost renown
And the rush of an Irish onset.

Woe! he is leagued with his father's foe,
Hath buried the ancient fever
Of hate, while he watches his birthright go
Away from his hands for ever;
No longer Clan-Niall deals blow for blow,
His country's bonds to sever.

Over the Ford to his castle grey
They troop with their pennons flying—
(*Was that the ring of a far hurray,*
*Or the banshee eerily crying?*)—
In glittering glory the gallant array
Spurs hard up the Strand low-lying.

Three swift-speeding days with the castle's lord
They had hunted his woods and valleys;
Three revelling nights while the huge logs roared,
And the bard with his harp-string dallies,
Freely they quaffed of the rich wine poured
As meed of the courtly sallies.

(*Yet one fair face in the laughing crowd*
*Grew wan as the mirth grew faster,*
*Her blue eyes saw but a spectral shroud,*
*And a spectral host that passed her;*
*Her ears heard only the banshee's loud*
*Wild prescience of disaster.*)

Gaily the voice of the chieftain rang,
Deeply his warriors blended
In chant of the jubilant song they sang
Ere the hours of the feasting ended;
But hark! Why that ominous clash and clang?
And what hath that shout portended?

What speech uncourteous this clamour provokes,
Through the midst of the banter faring?
Forth flashes the steel from the festal cloaks,
Vengeful and swift, unsparing—
And Clannabuidhe's bravest reel 'neath the strokes,
Strive blindly and die despairing.

O'Gilmore sprang to his Tanist's side
Shrilling his war-cry madly—
Ah! far are the kerns who at morning-tide
Would flock to the summons gladly.
The echoes break on the rafters wide
And sink into silence sadly.

Captive and bleeding he stands—the lord
Of the faithful dead around him;
Captive and bleeding—the victor horde
In their traitorous might surround him;
From his turrets is waving their flag uphorred,
And their cruel thongs have bound him.

* * * * *

Cold are the fires in the banqueting hall,
Withered the flowers that graced it,
Silent for ever the clansmen tall
Who stately and proudly paced it;
Gloom broods like a pall o'er each lofty wall
For the foul deed that disgraced it.

There is grief by the shores of the Northern sea
And grief in the woodlands shady,
There is wailing for warriors stout to see
Of the sinewy arm and steady;
There is woe for the Chieftain of Clannabuidhe
And tears for his gentle lady.

## 1577

# THE RATH OF MULLAGHMAST

By Richard D'Alton Williams

This was the most appalling of all the massacres that darkened in Ireland the reign of Elizabeth. Sir Francis Cosby invited about four hundred of the Irish chieftains—O'Moores, O'Nolans, O'Kellys, and Lalors—to a banquet in the Rath of Mullaghmast. Without the smallest suspicion of foul play the ill-fated chiefs accepted the invitation. They were slaughtered to a man.

O'ER the Rath of Mullaghmast[1]
On the solemn midnight blast
What bleeding spectres passed,
With their gashed breasts bare?
Hast thou heard the fitful wail
That o'erloads the sullen gale,
When the waning moon shines pale
O'er the curst ground there?

Hark! hollow moans arise
Through the black tempestuous skies,
And curses, strife, and cries,
From the lone Rath swell;
For bloody Sydney there
Nightly fills the lurid air
With th' unholy pomp and glare
Of the foul deep hell.

He scorches up the gale
With his knights in fiery mail;
And the banners of the Pale
O'er the red ranks rest.
But a wan and gory band
All apart and silent stand,
And they point th' accusing hand
At that hell-hound's crest.

[1] Five miles east of Athy.

Red streamlets, trickling slow
O'er their clotted cuilins[1] flow,
And still and awful woe
On each pale brow weeps—
Rich bowls bestrew the ground,
And broken harps around,
Whose once-enchanting sound
In the bard's blood sleeps.

False Sydney! knighthood's stain,
The trusting brave in vain—
Thy guests—ride o'er the plain
To thy dark cow'rd snare.
Flow'r of Offaly and Leix,
They have come thy board to grace—
Fools to meet a faithless race
Save with true swords bare.

While cup and song abound
The triple lines around
The closed and guarded mound
In the night's dark noon.
Alas! too brave O'More
Ere the revelry was o'er
They have spilled thy young heart's gore,
Snatched from love too soon!

At the feast unarmèd all,
Priest, bard, and chieftain fall
In the treacherous Saxon's hall,
O'er the bright wine bowl;
And now nightly round the board,
With unsheathed and reeking sword
Strides the cruel felon lord
Of the bloodstained soul.

[1] Long hair, *pron.* coolin.

Since that hour the clouds that passed
O'er the Rath of Mullaghmast
One tear have never cast
On the gore-dyed sod;
For the shower of crimson rain
That o'erflowed that fatal plain
Cries aloud, and not in vain
To the most high God.

Though the Saxon snake unfold
At thy feet his scales of gold,
And vow thee love untold,
Trust him not, Green Land.
Touch not with gloveless clasp
A coiled and deadly asp,
But with strong and guarded grasp
In your steel-clad hand.

*Desmond Wars*, 1573–1583

## THE DIRGE OF DESMOND

By Aubrey de Vere

The Earl of Thomond was the descendant of O'Brien, King of Thomond, and the Earl of Clancar was MacCarthy, descendant of the ancient kings of Desmond.

In the reign of Elizabeth the heads of the houses of Desmond and Ormond were at feud over the ownership of certain lands. Elizabeth decided in favour of Ormond, and thus made Desmond her enemy. For ten years, 1573 to 1583, Desmond was at war with the Crown, the Earl of Ormond, his most bitter enemy, fighting for the Queen against him. Gradually all his friends and allies were killed or captured, and he was left alone and a fugitive. He was eventually discovered in a cabin; he was stabbed, and his head sent to London. His only direct descendant was a sickly boy, on whose death "the very name of Desmond ceases to appear upon the page of Irish history."

I

RUSH, dark Dirge, o'er hills of Erin! Woe for Desmond's name and race!
Loving Conqueror whom the Conquered caught so soon to her embrace.

There's a veil on Erin's forehead: cold at last is Desmond's hand:—
Halls that roofed her outlawed Prelates blacken like a blackening brand.

II

Strongbow's sons forsook their Strong One, served so long with loving awe;
Roche the Norman, Norman Barry, and the Baron of Lidnaw:
Gaelic lords—that once were Princes—holp not—Thomond or Clancar:
Ormond, ill crowned Tudor's kinsman, ranged her hosts and led her war.

III

One by one his brothers perished: Fate down drew them to their grave:
Smerwick's cliffs beheld his Spaniards wrestling with the yeasty wave.
Swiftly sweep the eagles westward, gathering where the carcase lies:
There's a blacker cloud behind them: vultures next will rend their prize.

IV

'Twas not War that wrought the ruin! Sister portents yoked for hire,
Side by side dragged on the harrow—Famine's plague and plague of Fire:
Slain the herds, and burned the harvests, vale and plain with corpses strown,
Mid the waste they spread their feast; within the charnel reigned—alone.

V

In the death-hunt she was nigh him; she that scorned to leave his side:
By her Lord she stood and spake not, neck-deep in the freezing tide:
Round them waved the osiers; o'er them drooped the willows, rank on rank:
Troopers spurred: and bayed the bloodhounds, up and down the bleeding bank.

VI

From the East Sea to the West Sea rings the death-keen long and sore,
Erin's curse be his that led them, found the hovel, burst the door!
O'er the embers dead an old man silent bent with head to knee:
Slowly rose he; backward fell they:—"Seek ye Desmond? I am he!"
London Bridge! thy central arch-way props that grey head year by year:
But to God that head is holy; and to Erin it is dear:
When that bridge is dust, that river in the last fire-judgment dried,
The man shall live who fought for God; the man who for his country died.

1578

## THE GREEN WOODS OF SLEW

(SLIEVE MARGY)

By P. J. McCall

A lament for Rory Oge O'Moore, assassinated by MacGilla Patrick, June 30, 1578. Owny, mentioned in the concluding stanza, was Rory's son. Rory Oge O'Moore was son of the Chief of the O'Moore's, who was amongst the slain in the Rath of Mullaghmast.

IN the heart of the forest, a thrush 'gan to sing
Of losses, the sorest—the death of a king!—

Soon, to his bough leafless, my sympathy flew;
For I, too, roamed chiefless in the Green Woods of Slew.

He, high 'bove the heather, I low 'mong the fern,
Mourned sadly together—a bird and a kerne!—
Cried he, the sky winger:—"A hawking cuckoo
Has slain the chief singer of the Green Woods of Slew!"

Like his was my story: "Our glory is o'er;
For dead lies young Rory, the valiant O'More!
The scourge of the stranger, he chased the false crew,
Like a wolf-hound of danger in the Green Woods of Slew!

"My curse chill your castle, Gilla Patrick the base!
No Saxon Queen's vassal was Rory of Leix!
The Palesmen he vanquished: they parleyed with you;
And I am left anguished in the Green Woods of Slew!

"Smile Sidney and Perrot![1]—the gold, that oft failed—
Wise weasel, fierce ferret!—on the Gaelga prevailed:
The friend of his bosom proved faint and untrue,
And left me heart-woesome in the Green Woods of Slew."

To joy turned our singing; for, free from its nest,
A fledgling came winging with many a rest:
The gold its crest tins'ling, like dawn o'er the blue—
Another plumed princeling for the Green Woods of Slew!

[1] *Sidney and Perrot.* Sir Henry Sidney was Lord Deputy during part of Elizabeth's reign, from 1566 to 1580. This period includes the end of the Rebellion of Shane O'Neill, and his death and the commencement of the extensive plantation of Ireland by English or Scotch settlers. Sidney was succeeded for two years by Lord Grey de Wilton.

"Sir John Perrot succeeded Lord Grey as deputy, and to him the Government entrusted the conduct of the colonization scheme."—Walpole. He was recalled by Elizabeth on some jealous suspicion, and died in the Tower.

Away, sorrow blinding!—leave to women the dead—
Far better be grinding the grey axe, instead;
For soon, brave and bonny, from the hand of MacHugh,
Shall fly little Owny, to the Green Woods of Slew!

## A CLANSMAN'S LAMENT FOR RORY O'MOORE.

By William O'Neill (Slieve Margy)

THERE is grief in your homesteads, Slieve Margy, for the bravest and best of his race,
There is woe from Killeshin to Dysart for the young eagle-chieftain of Leix,
And many a dark curse is uttered on the dastard assassin who slew
Our Rory, the terror of Saxons and the scourge of the renegade crew;
Dan Dia! the nightmare of Saxons and a vengeance to renegades, too.

O, you who faced death without flinching when leading your clans in the fight,
Who never donned helmet or armour, for your trust was in God and the right,
To be slain by the hand of a traitor for a meed of the Sassenach's gold
Was not a fit death for a hero such as eyes shall but seldom behold.
The death you wished, Rory my chieftain, was to die where your flag was unrolled.

I have fought 'neath the golden-hued standard as it glintingly waved in the sun,
I have joined in the chase of the red deer from day-dawn till evening was done,

I have watched the sun sink o'er Slieve Margy thro' many a
war-ravaged year,
And I've seen more than one tanist, Rory, at the head of the
clansmen appear,
But none of your long line illustrious had as you such a glorious
career.

Full oft have we hunted the Saxon to the shelter of Cather-
logh's [1] towers,
Full oft has the Barrow been crimsoned by blood that was
other than ours;
Oft, too, have we battered their castles that were taken by law
from the Gael,
But the saffron-clad kerns never yielded to their veterans in
armour and mail,
And even the mention of Rory waked fear in the heart of the
Pale.

Even now when you slumber for ever the Saxons the border
have crossed;
But while we can wield our stout axes the cause of old Leix is
not lost,
For to war with the ruthless invaders the Clan O'Moore ever
will find
Some man fit to lead in the battle, and in council be fertile of
mind;
But I would that my death were ordained ere *you* left me to
sorrow behind.

[1] Carlow.

1580

## THE BATTLE OF GLENMALURE

### A BALLAD OF THE PALE

By M. J. McCann

This battle "was won by the heroic Clan O'Byrne of Wicklow, led by the redoubtable chief Feagh MacHugh. The English, who were led by Lord de Grey in person, suffered a total rout, and the Lord Deputy at the head of a few terrified survivors fled in disgrace to Dublin."—*People's History of Ireland*, Finerty. Audrey, Cosby, Carew, and Moore perished on the field.

AN autumn's sun is beaming on Dublin's castle towers,
Whose portals fast are pouring forth the Pale's embattled powers;
And on far Wicklow's hills they urge their firm and rapid way,
And well may proud Lord Grey exult to view their stern array.

For there was many a stately knight whose helm was rough with gold,
And spearman grim and musketeer, in Erin's wars grown old;
And on they speed for Glenmalure 'gainst daring Feach MacHugh,
Who lately with his mountain bands to that wild glen withdrew.

And now, above the rugged glen, their prancing steeds they rein,
While many an eager look along its mazy depths they strain,
But where's the martialled foe they seek—the camp or watch fires—where?
For save the eagle screaming high, no sign of life is there!

"Ho," cried the haughty Deputy, "my gallant friends, we're late—
We rightly deemed the rebel foe would scarce our visit wait!

But onward lead the foot, Carew! perhaps in sooth 'twere well
That something of their flocks and herds our soldiery should tell.

"I've heard it is the traitors' wont in cave and swamp to hide
Whene'er they deem their force too weak the battle's brunt to bide;
So, mark! Where'er a rebel lurks, arouse him in his lair—
And death to him whose hand is known an Irish foe to spare."

But thus the veteran Crosby spoke:—"My lord, I've known for years
The hardihood and daring of those stalwart mountaineers;
And, trust me that our bravest would in yonder mountain pass
But little like the greeting of an Irish gallowglass.

"'Tis true his brawny breast is not encased in tempered steel,
But sheer and heavy is the stroke his nervous arm can deal;
And, too, my lord, perhaps 'twere ill that here you first should learn
How truly like a mountain-cat is Erin's fearless kern."

"March," was the sole and stern reply; and as the leader spoke,
Horn and trump and thundering drum, a thousand echoes woke,
And, on, with martial tramp, the host all bright with glittering mail,
Wound, like a monstrous serpent, all along the gloomy vale.

But hark! what wild defiant yell the rocks and woods among
Has now so fierce from every side in thrilling echoes rung?—

O'Byrne's well-known warrison !—and hark ! along the dell,
With rapid and successive peal, the musket's deadly knell !

As wolves which in a narrow ring the hunter's band enclose,
So rush the baffled Saxons on the ambush of their foes ;—
And lo ! from every craggy screen as 'twere instinct with life
Up spring the mountain warriors to meet the coming strife.

And tall amid their foremost band, his broadsword flashing bright,
The dreaded Feagh MacHugh is seen to cheer them to the fight.
And from the fiery chieftain's lips those words of vengeance passed,
" Behold the accursed Sassenach—remember Mullaghmast !

" Now, gallant clansmen, charge them home ! Not oft ye hand to hand
In battle with your ruthless foes on terms so equal stand ;
Ye meet not now in firm array the spearman's serried ranks,
No whelming squadrons here can dash like whirlwinds on your flanks ! "

The keen and ponderous battle-axe with deadly force is plied'
And deep the mountain pike and skian in Saxon blood is dyed,
And many a polished corselet's pierced and many a helm is cleft—
And few of all that proud array for shameful flight are left !

No time to breathe or rally them—so hotly are they pressed ;
For thousand maddening memories fill each raging victor's breast,
And many a sire and brother's blood and many a sister's wrong
Were then avenged, dark Glenmalure, thy echoing vale along.

Carew and Audley deep had sworn the Irish foe to tame,
But thundering on their dying ear his shout of victory came;
And burns with shame De Grey's knit brow and throbs with rage his eye
To see his best in wildest rout from Erin's clansmen fly!

Ho! warder, for the deputy, fling wide thy fortress gate —
Lo! Burgher proud and haughty dame, be these the bands ye wait,
Whose banners lost and broken spears and wounds and disarray
Proclaim their dire disgrace and loss in that fierce mountain fray?

## DARK ROSALEEN

*Translated from the Irish by* J. C. MANGAN

In this beautiful and impassioned appeal to his loved country, Hugh Roe O'Donnel prophesies that she will survive her woes, that she will overcome the efforts to force on her an alien faith and an alien rule. The poem was written for O'Donnel by his chief bard. Red Hugh had been treacherously seized by Sir John Perrot in 1588. He endeavoured to escape in 1590 but failed. In 1591, by the help of Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, he escaped and joined O'Neill against the Crown.

O, MY Dark Rosaleen,
Do not sigh, do not weep!
The priests are on the ocean green,
They march along the deep.
There's wine . . . from the royal Pope
Upon the ocean green;
And Spanish ale shall give you hope,
My Dark Rosaleen,
My own Rosaleen,
Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,
Shall give you health, and help, and hope,
My Dark Rosaleen!

Over hills, and through dales,
Have I roamed for your sake;
All yesterday I sailed with sails
On river and on lake.
The Erne, . . . at its highest flood,
I dashed across unseen,
For there was lightning in my blood,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
Oh! there was lightning in my blood,
Red lightning lightened through my blood,
My Dark Rosaleen!

All day long, in unrest,
To and fro do I move;
The very soul within my breast
Is wasted for you, love!
The heart . . . in my bosom faints
To think of you, my Queen,
My life of life, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen!

Woe and pain, pain and woe,
Are my lot, night and noon,
To see your bright face clouded so,
Like to the mournful moon.
But yet . . . will I rear your throne
Again in golden sheen;
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!

'Tis you shall have the golden throne
'Tis you shall reign and reign alone,
My Dark Rosaleen!

Over dews, over sands,
Will I fly, for your weal:
Your holy delicate white hands
Shall girdle me with steel.
At home . . . in your emerald bowers,
From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
You'll think of me through daylight's hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
My Dark Rosaleen!

I could scale the blue air,
I could plough the high hills,
Oh, I could kneel all night in prayer,
To heal your many ills!
And one . . . beamy smile from you
Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My fond Rosaleen!
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
My dark Rosaleen!

O! the Erne shall run red
With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
And flames wrap hill and wood,

And gun-peal, and slogan-cry,
Wake many a glen serene.
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
The judgment hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
My Dark Rosaleen!

## 1590

## FOLLOW ME UP TO CARLOW

### By P. J. McCall

While Red Hugh O'Donnell and Art O'Neill were in prison, Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne was in arms against the Government. He won a signal victory at Glenmalure, which, however, as this ballad shows, did not content him. Later on he assisted in the escape from prison of Red Hugh O'Donnell.

LIFT, MacCathair Og,[1] your face
Brooding o'er the old disgrace
That black Fitzwilliam[2] stormed your place
And drove you to the fern!
Grey said victory was sure—
Soon the Firebrand he'd secure—
Until he met at Glenmalure—
Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne!

Curse and swear, Lord Kildare,
Feagh will do what Feagh will dare,
Now, Fitzwilliam, have a care,
Fallen is your star low,
Up with halbert, out with sword.
On we go—for, by the Lord,
Feagh MacHugh has given the word,
"Follow me up to Carlow."

[1] MacCahir Ogue was Brian MacCahir Cavanagh whom Fitzwilliam had driven out of his possessions.
[2] Fitzwiliam was Viceroy from 1588 to 1592.

See the swords of Glen Imail
Flashing o'er the English pale,
See all the children of the Gael
  Beneath O'Byrne's banners.
Rooster of a fighting stock,
Would you let a Saxon cock
Crow out upon an Irish rock;
  Fly up and teach him manners.
    Curse and swear, Lord Kildare, etc.

From Tasagart to Clonmore
Flows a stream of Saxon gore,
Och! great was Ruari Og O'More
  At sending loons to Hades.
White is sick and Lane is fled—
Now for black Fitzwilliam's head—
We'll send it over dripping red
  To Liza and her ladies.
    Curse and swear, Lord Kildare, etc.

## 1591

## THE WELCOME TO HUGH ROE O'DONNELL

By John Keegan Casey (Leo)

On his second and successful escape from imprisonment in Dublin Castle (December 25, 1591), Hugh Roe O'Donnell joined the Rebellion of Hugh O'Neill in the north. Previous to this there had been a bitter feud between the two families.

OH! welcome back! oh! welcome back unto our hearts
  once more,—
Hearts joyless, since, a captive ta'en, you passed from Ulster's
  shore;
Oh! welcome back! list to the shouts fierce bursting from
  the clan,
*Who hail the fiery-hearted boy now risen to a man!*

Oh! sorely have we waited thro' the long slow-footed years,
Still mingling groans and curses with the burning, blinding tears,
Still pining for the avenging march; but now, O'Donnel Roe,
Your bonds are broke, the time has come for vengeance on the foe.

For vengeance on the foe who played the serpent's treacherous part,—
Whose chains pressed down the heavings of our chieftain's bounding heart—
Who kept that spirit lone and dead, which panted for the hills,
The clansman's shout, the creach's song, the crooning of the rills.

We saw thee in thy dungeon-keep count up the weary hours,
While paled thy cheek within the shade of those sepulchral towers;
We felt the burning of thy soul, as day succeeded day,
For green Tyrconnel's mountain glens, away, so far away.

But now, thou'rt here, as free from thrall as eagle in the sky,
And we are here with hand and blade to avenge thy wrongs or die;
*Thy* wrongs, O Hugh! thy country's wrongs, are they remembered now?
We need not ask—the answer rests upon thy clouded brow.

* * * * *

O darling idol of our hearts, the hour has dawned at last,
O'Neil holds forth the kindly hand, the ancient feud is past;
Come let us crown thee chief upon thy weak-souled father's throne,
Then on for Freedom and for Faith, Tyrconnel and Tyrowen.

There's joy to-night o'er Ulster wide, from Glynn to Donegall,
And merrily wild laughter shakes Dungannon's princely hall,
In mountain hut and castle keep, bright usquebach doth flow,
To toast thy health and welcome back our own O'Donnell Roe!

## 1597

## TYRRELL'S PASS

### By Robert Dwyer Joyce

Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, being anxious to prevent the English and Anglo-Irish forces of Meath and Leinster from joining the Lord Deputy in Ulster or co-operating with Sir Conyers Clifford in Connaught, deputed Tyrrell, Lord of Fertullagh, in Westmeath, to act for him in those provinces with this object in view. Young Barnwell, Baron of Trimbleston, with 1,000 men of Meath, was marching to meet his English friends, when he was intercepted in the Pass—since that day known as Tyrrell's Pass—by Tyrrell and his friend O'Connor of Offally in Kildare, a very valiant soldier. How Tyrrell with his 400 men overcame Barnwell and his 1,000 is made clear in the following ballad.

I

BY the flow'ry banks of Brosna the burning sunset fell
In many a beam and golden gleam on hill and mead and dell;
And from thy shores, bright Ennell, to the far-off mountair crest
Over plain and leafy wildwood there was peace and quiet rest.
Brave Tyrrell sat that summer eve amid the woody hills,
With Captain Owney at his side, by Brosna's shining rills—
Brave Tyrrell of the flying camps and Owney Oge,[1] the strong,
And round them lay their followers the forest glade along;
Four hundred men of proof they were, these warriors free and bold,
In many a group they sat around the green skirts of the wold.

II

The sun had set upon their camp, the stars were burning bright,
All save the Chief and Owney Oge were sleeping in their light:

[1] Owney Oge the Strong was Owney O'More, usually called Owney Mac Rory, son of the famous chief Rory O'More of Leix (Little Owney of "The Green Woods of Slew" above).

And they sat downward where the stream was singing its deep song,
Planning fierce raid and foray bold that starry twilight long.
"By my good faith," said Tyrrell, "for days we've wandered wide
And on no foe, still, high or low, our good swords have we tried;
There's many a keep around us here, and many a traitor town,
And we should have a town or keep ere another sun goes down."
Answered Owney:—"Or may fortune send young Barnwell's forces here,
A pleasant fight in the cool of night for me in the starlight clear."

III

Sudden they ceased and to their feet both warriors instant sprang,
And down the little streamlet bed their challenge fiercely rang.
They'd heard a sound beside the stream as if some forest bird
Awak'ning from his nightly dreams amid the leaves had stirred.
A password—then a stealthy step like a wolf from out his lair,
And their trusty spy of the falcon eye stood right before them there.
"Young Barnwell with a thousand men, high boasting at their head
Will find ye here in these green glades at morning light," he said.
Then vanished silent as he came beneath the forest shade,
And the clank of sabre followed him on his pathway through the glade.

IV

For his comrades at their leader's call beside the streamlet's bank
Were filing from their ferny beds in many a serried rank,
And now along their ordered lines Fertullagh's accents came—
"The foeman through our native fields speeds down with sword and flame:
We'll meet him as we ever did, and though we are but few,
We'll meet him in the Eastern pass and give him welcome due."
They gained that pass when morning leapt above the eastern wave,
And half his men to Owney Oge the hardy chieftain gave.
"Now lie ye here in ambush close while we retreat below,
And when the last of the band have passed we'll spring upon the foe!"

V

There came no sound from those ambushed men as they crouched among the fern,
But the deep breath of the gallowglass or whispering of the kern.
The light breeze rustling through the boughs in the leafy wood all round;
The chirp and song of the busy birds: was heard no other sound.
And now along the misty plain shone out the morning ray
On Barnwell's bright and serried files all burning for the fray;
A thousand valiant men they were from Meath's broad fertile plain.
And when they saw Fertullah's files, they cried in high disdain,
"Two hundred men to stem our charge! We'll scatter them like chaff."
Then poured them through that perilous pass with mocking cheer and laugh.

VI

Now Tyrrell flies; but turns when he hears "The Tyrrell's March" ring out:
He answers with the trumpet note and the gallowglass's shout.
The startled wolf leaps from his lair: "Croak, croak," cry the ravens hoarse;
"We'll soon have food for each hungry brood, the rider and the horse."
And out like wolves from the forest gloom or a close-packed herd of deer,
Two hundred ran on the foeman's van, two hundred on the rear:
The kern go darting right and left, with their guns and gleaming pikes,
The giant gallowglass strides down with vengeance in his eye,
Wild yelling out his charging shout like a thunder clap on high.

VII

Now in the narrow open pass the battle rolls along:
Now 'mid the bogs and woods each side the fighting warriors throng;
As hounds around a hunted wolf some forest rock beneath,
Whence comes no sound save the mortal rush and the gnash of many teeth;
Their charging shouts die gradual down—no sound rolls outward save
The volley of the fatal gun, and the crash of axe and glaive.
O, life it is a precious gem, yet many there will throw
The gem away in that mortal fray for vengeance on their foe.
In deadly silence still they fight, till the pass is covered wide
With war steeds strong, and soldiers slain, and many a gory tide.

VIII

Hurrah! that shout it rolleth out with cadence wild and stern,
'Tis the triumph roar of the gallowglass and the fierce yell of the kern.
The foeman flies before their steel—but not for far he flies,
In the narrow pass, in the bogs and scrubs on either side he dies.
Where'er he speeds death follows him like a shadow in his tracks—
He meets the gleam of the fearful pike and the murderous battle-axe.
Young Barnwell was made prisoner, fighting bravely in the van,
And his comrades all fell slain around him—save one single man:
That man they sped, and away he fled, unharmed by gallowglass,
That he might tell how his comrades fell that morn at Tyrrell's Pass.[1]

## *A.D.* 1597

## O'DONNELL ABU

### By Michael J. McCann

Red Hugh O'Donnell joined in the war of Hugh O'Neill against Elizabeth, 1598. O'Donnell Abu was the war cry of the O'Donnells just as Butler Abu was the war cry of the Butlers.

PROUDLY the note of the trumpet is sounding,
Loudly the war-cries arise on the gale,
Fleetly the steed by Lough Swilly is bounding
To join the thick squadrons in Saimear's green vale.
On, every mountaineer,
Strangers to flight and fear;

[1] Tyrrell's Pass is about ten miles due south of Mullingar.

Rush to the standard of dauntless Red Hugh!
Bonnought and gallowglass,
Throng from each mountain pass!
On for old Erin—O'Donnell Abu!

Princely O'Neil to our aid is advancing,
With many a chieftain and warrior clan;
A thousand proud steeds in his vanguard are prancing,
'Neath the borderers brave from the banks of the Bann;
Many a heart shall quail
Under its coat of mail;
Deeply the merciless foeman shall rue
When on his ear shall ring
Borne on the breeze's wing
Tir Conaill's dread war-cry—O'Donnell Abu!

Wildly o'er Desmond the war-wolf is howling,
Fearless the eagle sweeps over the plain,
The fox in the streets of the city is prowling—
All, all who would scare them are banished or slain!
Grasp every stalwart hand,
Hackbut and battle-brand—
Pay them all back the deep debt so long due:
Norris and Clifford[1] well
Can of Tir Conaill tell—
Onward to glory—O'Donnell Abu!

Sacred the cause that Clann-Conaills defending—
The altars we kneel at and homes of our sires,
Ruthless the ruin the foe is extending—
Midnight is red with the plunderer's fires!
On with O'Donnell then
Fight the old fight again.

[1] The *Norris* mentioned here was General Norris who was defeated by Hugh O'Neill at Clontibert in Monaghan, in 1597. *Clifford* was Sir Conyers Clifford, President of Connaught, who had already encountered O'Donnell, and who, in 1599, was defeated and slain in the battle of the Curlews.

Sons of Tir Conaill, all valiant and true!
Make the false Saxon feel
Erin's avenging steel!
Strike for your country!—O'Donnell Abu!

## *A.D.* 1598

## THE BATTLE OF BÉAL-AN-ATHA-BUIDHE[1]

### By William Drennan

Captain Williams was holding Portmore against O'Neill, and he and his troops were on the point of starvation when Marshal Bagnal marched to his aid. On his march from Armagh, Hugh O'Neill, aided by O'Donnell and Maguire, intercepted him at the Yellow Ford. The result was that Bagnal himself was slain, and the English suffered the greatest defeat they had yet sustained in Ireland.

Won by the great Hugh O'Neill over Marshal Bagenal and the flower of Elizabeth's army, between Armagh and Blackwater Bridge, A.D. 1598.—Note from *Irish Minstrelsy*.

BY O'Neill close beleaguered, the spirits might droop
Of the Saxon three hundred shut up in their coop,
Till Bagenal drew forth his Toledo and swore
On the sword of a soldier, to succour Port Mor.

His veteran troops in the foreign wars tried—
Their features how bronzed, and how haughty their stride—
Stept steadily on; it was thrilling to see
That thunder-cloud brooding o'er Béal-an-atha-Buidhe.

The flash of their armour, inlaid with fine gold—
Gleaming matchlocks, and cannon that mutteringly rolled—
With the tramp and the clank of those stern cuirassiers
Dyed in blood of the Flemish and French cavaliers.

And are the mere Irish, with pikes and with darts,
With but glibb-covered heads, and but rib-guarded hearts—
Half-naked, half-fed, with few muskets, no guns—
The battle to dare against England's proud sons?

[1] *Irish Minstrelsy* (Walter Scott), p. 51, pronounce Beal an atha bwee.

Poor bonnochts, and wild gallowglasses and kern,[1]
Let them war with rude brambles, sharp furze, and dry fern;
Wirrastrue for their wives—for their babes ochanie.
If they wait for the Saxon at Béal-an-atha-Buidhe.

Yet O'Neill standeth firm—few and brief his commands:
"Ye have hearts in your bosoms, and pikes in your hands;
Try how far you can push them, my children, at once;
*Fág an bealach!* and down with horse, foot, and great guns.

"They have gold and gay arms—they have biscuit and bread;
Now sons of my soul, we'll be found and be fed;"
And he clutched his claymore, and, "Look yonder!" laughed he,
"What a grand commissariat for *Báal-an-atha-Buidhe!*"

Near the chief a grim tyke, an O'Shanagan stood,
His nostrils, dilated, seemed snuffing for blood;
Rough and ready to spring, like the wiry wolf-hound.
Of Irené—who, tossing his pike with a bound,

Cried, "My hand to the Sassenach! ne'er may I hurl
Another to earth if I call him a churl!
He finds me in clothing, in booty, and bread—
My chief, won't O'Shanagan give him a bed?

"Land of Owen aboo!" And the Irish rushed on—
The foe fired but one volley—their gunners are gone;
Before the bare bosoms the steel-coats have fled,
Or, despite casque and corselet, lie dying and dead.

[1] Bonnocht = a billeted soldier, gallowglasses = heavy troops; kern = light troops.

And brave Harry Bagenal, he fell while he fought
With many gay gallants—they slept as men ought
Their faces to heaven ; there were others, alack !
By pikes overtaken, and taken aback.

And my Irish got clothing, coins, colours, great store,
Arms, forage, and provender—plunder go leor !
They munched the white manchets—they champed the brown chine—
*Fuilleluadh !* for that day how the natives did dine !

The chieftain looked on, when O'Shanagan rose,
And cried, " Hearken O'Neill ! I've a health to propose
'To our Sassenach hosts ! ' " and all quaffed in huge glee
With *Cead mile fáilte go* BEAL-AN-ATHA-BUIDHE !

## 1598

## THE WAR-SONG OF TYRCONNEL'S BARD AT THE BATTLE OF BLACKWATER

BY AUBREY DE VERE

The Blackwater is another name for the Battle of Beal-an-atha-buidhe (= the Yellow Ford).

GLORY to God and to the Powers, that fight
For Freedom and the Right !
We have them, then, the invaders ! there they stand
Once more on Oriel's land !
They have passed the gorge stream cloven,
And the mountain's purple bound ;
Now the toils are round them woven,
Now the nets are spread around !

Give them time : their steeds are blown ;
Let them stand and round them stare,
Breathing blasts of Irish air :
Our eagles know their own !

Thou rising sun, fair fall
Thy greeting on Armagh's time-honoured wall,
And on the willows hoar
That fringe thy silver waters, Avonmore !
See ! on that hill of drifted sand
The far-famed marshal holds command,
Bagnal, their bravest :—to the right,
That recreant, neither chief nor knight,
" The Queen's O'Reilly," [1] he that sold
His country, clan, and Church, for gold !
" Saint George for England ! "—recreant crew
What are the saints ye spurn to you ?
They charge ; they pass yon grassy swell ;
They reach our hidden pit-falls well :
On !—warriors native to the sod
Be on them, in the power of God !

* * * * *

Seest thou yon stream, whose tawny waters glide
Through weeds and yellow marsh lingeringly and slowly ?
Blest is that spot and holy.
There, ages past, Saint Bercan stood and cried—
" This spot shall quell one day th' invader's pride ! "
He saw in mystic trance
The blood-stain flush yon rill :
On !—hosts of God, advance !
Your country's fate fulfil !

* * * * *

[1] This was Macmorra O'Reilly, one of the O'Reilly chiefs of Cavan, who was fighting on the English side and was proud of being called the Queen's O'Reilly.

Hark! the thunder of their meeting!
Hand meets hand, and rough the greeting!
Hark, the crash of shield and brand;
They mix, they mingle, band with band,
Like two horn-commingling stags,
Wrestling on the mountain crags,
Intertwined, intertangled,
Mangled forehead meeting mangled!
See! the wavering darkness through
I see the banner of Red Hugh;
Close beside is thine, O'Neill!
Now they stoop and now they reel,
Rise once more and onward sail,
Like two falcons on one gale!
O ye clansmen, past me rushing,
Like mountain torrents seaward gushing,
Tell the chiefs that from this height
Their chief of bards beholds the fight;
That on theirs he pours his spirit;
Marks their deeds and chaunts their merit
While the Priesthood evermore,
Like him that ruled God's hosts of yore,
With arms outstretched, that God implore!

* * * * *

"Glory be to God on high!"
That shout rang up into the sky.
The plain lies bare: the smoke drifts by;
Again that cry; they fly! they fly!
O'er them standards thirty-four
Waved at morn: they wave no more.

Glory be to Him alone Who holds the nations in His Hand,
And to them the heavenly guardians of our Church and native land!

Sing, ye priests, your deep Te Deum ; bards make answer
loud and long,
In your rapture flinging heavenward censers of triumphant
song.
Isle, for centuries blind in bondage, lift once more thine
ancient boast
From the cliffs of Innishowen southward on to Carbery's
coast !
We have seen the right made perfect, seen the Hand that
ruled the spheres
Glance like lightning through the clouds, and backward roll
the wrongful years,
Glory fadeth, but this triumph is no barren mundane glory ;
Rays of healing it shall scatter on the eyes that read our story :
Upon nations bound and torpid as they waken it shall shine ;
As on Peter in his chains the angel shone, with light divine.
From th' unheeding, from th' unholy it may hide, like truth,
its ray ;
But when Truth and Justice conquer on their crowns its beam
shall play,
O'er the ken of troubled tyrants it shall trail a meteor's glare ;
For the blameless it shall glitter as the star of morning fair ;
Whensoever Erin triumphs then its dawn it shall renew ;
Then O'Neill shall be remember'd, and Tyrconnell's chief,
Red Hugh !

## 1599

## THE PASS OF PLUMES

By R. D. Williams

When the Earl of Essex was made Viceroy of Ireland, he felt quite confident of subduing the "rough rug-headed Kernes." He gathered together a huge and magnificent army, whose very appearance, thought he, would strike terror to the hearts of the Irish. He found his mistake, as the following poem tells. The Pass of Plumes was near Maryborough. The commander on the Irish side was Owny MacRory O'More, who has already been mentioned more than once in these pages.

"LOOK out," said O'Moore to his clansmen, "afar—
Is yon white cloud the herald of tempest or war?
Hark! know you the roll of the foreigners' drums?
By Heaven! Lord Essex in panoply comes,
With corslet and helmet and gay bannerol,
And the shields of the nobles with blazon and scroll;
And as snow on the larch in December appears
What a winter of plumes on that forest of spears.
To the clangour of trumpets and waving of flags
The clattering cavalry prance o'er the crags;
And their plumes—By St. Kyran! false Saxon, e'er night
You shall wish these fine feathers were wings for your flight

"Shall we leave all the blood and the gold of the Pale
To be shed by Armagh and be won by O'Neill?
Shall we yield to O'Ruark, to McGuire and O'Donnell,
Brave chieftains of Breffny, Fermanagh—Tyrconnell;
Yon helmets, that "Erick" thrice over would pay
For the Sassenach heads they'll protect not to-day?
No! By red Mullaghmast, fiery clansmen of Leix
Avenge your sires' blood on their murderer's race.
Now, sept of O'Moore, fearless sons of the heather,
Fling your scabbards away and strike home and together!"



RICHARD DALTON WILLIAMS

Then loudly the clang of commingled blows
Upswelled from the sounding fields,
And the joy of a hundred trumps arose,
And the clash of a thousand shields,
And the long plumes danc'd, and the falchions rung
And flash'd the whirled spear
And the furious barb through the wild war sprung,
And trembled the earth with fear;
The fatal bolts exulting fled,
And hiss'd as they leap'd away;
And the tortur'd steed on the red grass bled,
Or died with a piercing neigh.

I see their weapons crimson'd—I hear the mingled cries
Of rage and pain and triumph, as they thunder to the skies
The Coolun'd kern rushes upon, armour, knight, and mace,
And bone and brass are broken in his terrible embrace!
The coursers roll and struggle; and the riders, girt in steel,
From their saddles crush'd and cloven to the purple heather reel.
And shatter'd there, and trampled by the charger's iron hoof,
The seething brain is bursting through the crashing helmets' roof.
Joy! Heaven strikes for Freedom! and Elizabeth's array,
With her paramour to lead 'em, are sore beset to-day.

Their heraldry and plumery, their coronets and mail
Are trampled on the battlefield, or scattered on the gale!
As cavalry of ocean, the living billows bound
When light'nings leap above them, and thunders clang around,
And tempest crested dazzlingly, caparison'd in spray
They crushed the black and broken rocks, with all their roots away;
So charg'd the stormy chivalry of Erin in her ire—
Their shock the roll of ocean, their swords electric fire—

They rose like banded billows that when wintry tempests blow
The trembling shore, with stunning roar and dreadful wreck o'erflow,

And where they burst tremendously, upon the bloody groun'
Both horse and man, from rere to van, like shiver'd barques went down.
Leave your costly Milan hauberks, haughty nobles of the Pale,
And your snowy ostrich feathers, as a tribute to the Gael.
Fling away gilt spur and trinket in your hurry, knight and squire,
They will make our virgins ornament, or decorate the lyre.
Ho! Essex! how your vestal Queen will storm when she hears
The "Mere Irish" chased her minion and his twenty thousand spears.

Go! tell the royal virgin that O'Moore, M'Hugh, O'Neill,
Will smite the faithless stranger while there's steel in Innisfail.
The blood you shed shall only serve more deep revenge to nurse,
And our hatred be as lasting as the tyranny we curse.
From age to age consuming, it shall blaze a quenchless fire,
And the son shall thirst and burn still more fiercely than his sire.
By our sorrows, songs and battles—by our cromlechs, raths and towers—
By sword and chain, by all our slain—between your race and ours,
By naked glaives, and yawning graves, and ceaseless tears and gore,
Till battle's flood wash out in blood your footsteps from the shore!

## 1599

# THE BATTLE OF RATHDRUM

By M. J. McCann

In the beautiful Valley of Glenmalure, where the Avonmore and Avonbeg form the Meeting of the Waters, stood the hall of Ballinacor, the residence of Feagh McHugh O'Byrne; and, after his betrayal and death, his son Phelim lost no time in preparing to defend his patrimony and people. Essex, the new Lord Lieutenant, stationed Sir Henry Harrington with a strong force at Wicklow Castle. He issued forth to subdue Phelim with 600 men, of whom 68 were horse under his brave nephew, Captain Montague, and encamped a mile from the ford on the Avonmore. Phelim, hot to avenge the death of his father, did not wait beyond the river, but crossed and alarmed the English army during the night. In the morning the Irish, though few in number, ill equipped and armed, rapidly advancing on the enemy, put them to utter rout, slaying "the greatest part."

I

BY Avonbeg and Avonmore there's many a happy home;
On every side through Ranelagh the bright streams flash and foam;
And snow-white flocks roam far and wide through many a verdant glade;—
Sure ne'er was land so wondrous fair by nature elsewhere made!

II

And from each olden belfry, still by time or foe unrent,
To prayer is far o'er hill and dale the silvery summons sent.
And maidens fair as earth e'er saw, amid these valleys dwell;
And Ranelagh's brave sons well know to guard these treasures well.

III

Still proudly over Ballinacor O'Byrne's banner waves;
And all the Cailliagh Ruah's[1] power, as erst, defiant braves;
And though heroic Pheagh is gone, well can young Phelim wield
The sword his sire triumphant waved o'er many a stricken field.

* * * * *

[1] *Cailliagh Ruah's.* The name by which Elizabeth was known in Ireland towards the end of her reign. It means The Red Hag.

IV

Up Glenmalure with furious speed, who doth so reckless ride ?
Some news perchance of war and scath he brings from Avon side :—
For Wykinglo [1] full long has flashed beneath each noontide sun
With helm and lance and corselet bright, and spear and burnished gun ?

V

Too true,—red sign of war ! behold the beacon's signal light
Is answered, with a tongue of flame from every neighbouring height ;
And down the hills and through the glens, as fleet as mountain roes,
O'Byrne's clansmen rushing come to meet their Saxon foes.

VI

For Harrington from Wykinglo has marched for Avon's ford,
And sworn to sweep o'er Ranelagh with ruthless fire and sword :
And all that bear O'Byrne's name, whate'er the sex or age,
To doom in his avenging hate to glut his soldier's rage.

* * * * *

VII

'Tis morn, at close of joyous May, and high has climbed the sun,
But why a mile from Avon's ford still lingers Harrington ?
Around him stand his captains tried ; behind, his marshalled men ;
But why the gloom upon his brow as he gazes up the glen ?

[1] Wykinglo = Lake of the Ships. This name for Wicklow is of Danish origin. It comes from Broad Lough, into which the River Vartry empties itself.

VIII

He sees approach O'Byrne's van, by gallant chieftains led;
In every hand a pike or brand,—Prince Phelim at their head!
And, rapid as a mountain flood, the fiery clansmen come;—
There's little time for trumpet bray, or roll of Saxon drum!

IX

No thought of their outnumbering foes—they thought of home and Pheagh;[1]
One thrilling cheer! and fierce they dash upon that proud array!
There's clangour dire of steel on steel—there's crash of blade and spear—
One volley's sped—and England's ranks have broke like frightened deer!

X

And in the wild and headlong flight away's cast spear and gun,—
Unheeded is the bugle's call—the battle's lost and won!
And desperately for Wykinglo rush that disordered rout
Nor dares one panting fugitive e'en turn his head about.

XI

While, in revenge for gallant Pheagh, the victors urge the chase,
Until the castle closed its gates upon their foes' disgrace;
And many a polished morion, and steel jack glittering lay,
As trophies for the victors, all along the corse-strewn way.

XII

And but for valiant Montague's well-mounted cuirassiers,
Whose levelled lances sometimes checked the naked mountaineers

[1] Pheagh. Pronounced Fay.

For Essex martial vengeance [1] but few had 'scaped that day
Their vengeance who had madly wept above the bier of Pheagh.

XIII

And now, throughout all Ranelagh be joy and festive cheer;—
The children may in safety play, the maidens have no fear.
And long may princely Phelim bear the sword Pheagh bravely bore;
And guard as on that glorious day, the ford of Avonmore!

*December*, 1601

## THE MARCH TO KINSALE

By Aubrey de Vere

Don Juan de Aguila, having landed with a large force of Spaniards at Kinsale and seized the town, Lord Mountjoy, the Viceroy, and Carew at once blockaded the place. Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill united, and marched to the relief of the Spaniards. All the plans were laid for a night attack, but the chiefs were betrayed, lost their way in the stormy darkness of the night, and when morning broke were easily defeated. Aguila surrendered and returned with his troops to Spain, whither followed Hugh O'Donnell. O'Neill retreated to Ulster.

O'ER many a river bridged with ice,
Through many a vale with snow-drifts dumb,
Past quaking fen and precipice
The Princes of the North are come!
Lo, these are they that year by year,
Roll'd back the tide of England's war;—
Rejoice Kinsale! thy help is near!
That wondrous winter march is o'er.
And thus they sang, "To-morrow morn
Our eyes shall rest upon the foe.
Roll on, swift night, in silence borne,
And blow, thou breeze of sunrise, blow!"

[1] Essex, annoyed by this and other defeats sustained by his armies, ordered the execution of a young Irish lieutenant, Pierce Walshe, although he could in no sense have been termed responsible for the rout at Rathdrum. He even succeeded in saving the colours and drum of his company, but a scapegoat was needed and he was executed.

Blithe as a boy on march'd the host
With droning pipe and clear-voiced harp;
At last above that southern coast
Rang out their war-steeds' whinny sharp;
And up the sea-salt slopes they wound,
And airs once more of ocean quaff'd;
Those frosty woods the blue wave's bound,
As though May touched them waved and laugh'd.
And thus they sang, "To-morrow morn
Our eyes shall rest upon our foe:
Roll on swift night, in silence borne,
And blow, thou breeze of sunrise, blow!"

Beside their watch-fires couch'd all night
Some slept, some danced, at cards some play'd,
While chanting on a central height
Of moonlit crag, the priesthood pray'd:
And some to sweetheart, some to wife
Sent message kind; while others told
Triumphant tales of recent fight
Or legends of their sires of old.
And thus they sang, "To-morrow morn
Our eyes at last shall see the foe:
Roll on, swift night, in silence borne,
And blow, thou breeze of sunrise, blow!"

*January* 3, *A.D.* 1602

## KINSALE

After Kinsale Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and Rory O'Donnell, Hugh's younger brother, made their peace with the English Crown. The latter was made Earl of Tyrconnell.

WHAT man can stand amid a place of tombs,
Nor yearn to that poor vanquished dust beneath?
Above a nation's grave no violet blooms;
A vanquished nation lies in endless death.

'Tis past; the dark is dense with ghost and vision!
All lost! the air is throng'd with moan and wail:
But one day more and hope had been fruition:
O Athunree, thy fate o'erhung Kinsale!

What name is that which lays on every head
A hand like fire, striking the strong locks grey?
What name is named not save with shame and dread.
Once let us breathe it, then no more for aye!

Kinsale! accursed be he, the first who bragg'd
"A city stands where roam'd but late the flock,"
Accurs'd the day, when, from the mountain dragg'd,
Thy corner-stone forsook the mother-rock!

## THE BATTLE OF THE RAVEN'S GLEN

### By R. D. Joyce

Another incident in O'Sullivan Beare's famous retreat from Glengariff to Leitrim, after Kinsale and the capture of O'Sullivan's castle of Dunboy. Of the thousand who left Glengariff, only thirty-five reached O'Rorke's castle at Leitrim.

I

FROM the halls of his splendour by Bantry and Beara,
From his turrets that look o'er the silver Kinmera[1]
With his band of brave warriors O'Sullivan bore him
Till the mountains of Limerick rose darkly before him;
There he camped on the heath where the deep pools were paven
With the stars of the night, in the Glen of the Raven.

[1] Kinmera = Kenmare Bay.

II

In that glen was no sound save the murmur of fountains,
And the moonbeams were silvering the thunder-split mountains;
When a horse tramp was heard from the Ounanaar's [1] water,
Sounding down from the gorge of the dark Vale of Slaughter,
And the rider ne'er reined till his long plume was waven
By the breezes that sighed through the Glen of the Raven.

III

Up sprang from the heather the chieftains around him,
And they asked where the foe 'mid the moorlands had found him,
For they knew he had passed through the battle's fierce labour
From the foam o'er his steed and the blood on his sabre,
While the rocks with the hoofs of their chargers were graven
As they pranced into lines in the Glen of the Raven.

IV

'Twas the scout of lone Bregoge: he'd heard in the gloaming
Fierce yells o'er that rough torrent's roaring and foaming;
Then a dash and a shout and a rushing did follow,
For the foe burst around him from hillside and hollow;
But a road to his chief through their ranks he had claven—
Now he stood by his side in the Glen of the Raven.

V

Up started Black Hugh from his couch by the fountain,
The outlaw of Dana from Brone's rugged mountain.
"There's a passage," he said, "over Ounanaar's water,
Where Clan Morna of old were defeated with slaughter;
There bide we the steps of the traitor and craven
And he ne'er shall come down through the Glen of the Raven."

[1] Ounanaar = Glenanaar = Vale of Slaughter.

VI

The ambush was set in the Passage of Lightning,
And now in the moonlight sharp weapons came brightening.
The lance of the Saxon from Mulla and Mallow,
And the pike of the kern from the wilds of Duhallow;
Soon they clash with the swords of the men of Bearhaven,
Who now slowly retreat to the Glen of the Raven.

VII

Then O'Sullivan burst like the angel of slaughter
On the foe by the current of Geeragh's wild water,
And his brave men of Cork and of Kerry's wild regions
Were the rushing destroyers, his death-dealing legions;
And onward they rode over traitor and craven,
Whose bones long bestrewed the lone Glen of the Raven.

VIII

All silent again over forest and mountain,
Save the voice in that glen of Ossheen's ancient fountain;
While O'Sullivan's crest with its proud eagle feather
And broadswords and pikes glitter now from the heather;
For where the dark pools with the bright stars are graven,
Secure rests the clan in the Glen of the Raven.

## 1607

## THE PRINCES OF THE NORTH

By Ethna Carbery

In the year 1607 the Government supposed, or feigned to suppose, that O'Neill and O'Donnell were plotting against it. They were cited to appear in Dublin on a certain date, and were ready to do so when the date was postponed and the chiefs, weary of their insecure position and the treachery by which they were surrounded, retired into voluntary exile, leaving the shores of Ireland for ever in the September of that year. O'Donnell died in 1608, but O'Neill lived on sadly for eight years, dying in Rome in 1616.

SUMMER and Winter the long years have flown
Since you looked your last for ever on the hills of Tyrone;
On the vales of Tyrconnell, on the faces strained that night
To watch you, Hugh and Rory, over waves in your flight.

Not in Uladh of your kindred your bed hath been made
Where the holy earth haps them and the quicken-tree gives shade;
But your dust lies afar, where Rome hath given space
To the tanist of O'Donnell, and the Prince of Nial's race.

O sad in green Tyrone when you left us, Hugh O'Neill,
In our grief and bitter need, to the spoiler's cruel steel?
And sad in Donegal when you went, O'Rory *Bán*,
From your father's rugged towers and the wailing of your clan.

Our hearts had bled to hear of that dastard deed in Spain;
We wept our Eaglet, in his pride, by Saxon vileness slain;
And, girded for revenge, we waited but the call of war
To bring us like a headlong wave from heathery height and scaur.

*Ochón* and *ochón* when the tidings travelled forth
That our chiefs had sailed in sorrow from the glens of the north.
*Ochón* and *ochón!* how our souls grew sore afraid,
And our love followed after in the track your keel had made!

And yet in green Tyrone they keep your memory still,
And tell you never fled afar, but sleep in Aileach Hill—
In stony sleep, with sword in hand and stony steed beside,
Until the horn shall waken you—the rock gate open wide.

Will you come again, O Hugh, in all your olden power,
In all the strength and skill we knew, with Rory, in that hour
When the Sword leaps from its scabbard, and the night hath passed away,
And Banbha's battle-cry rings loud at Dawning of the Day.

## 1608

## LAMENT OF THE LADY NUALA O'DONNELL

By P. J. McCall

The Lady Nuala was wife of Red Hugh (*pronounce* Noola)

MY heart is sore, loved Donegal,
As sore as woman's heart can be;
For every night sad voices call
Across the angry western sea.
I hear in them the waves that plained
The night we left Loch Swilly's shore.
They are moaning—Nuala, Nuala,
Ulster is no more!—
Wave on wave moans—Nuala, Nuala,
Ulster is no more!

I hear the wrathful winds of Heaven
That pushed our prow with might and main,
And strove, till they had almost driven
The homeless chieftains home again.[1]
To-night these winds ring in mine ear,
As oft they rang at port and door;
They are shrieking—Nuala, Nuala,
Ulster is no more!—
Wind on wind shrieks—Nuala, Nuala,
Ulster is no more!

And oh! there comes another sigh,
More sad than either wave or wind—
It is the echo of that cry
That came from those we left behind.
To-night they sit in hopeless woe,
And weep by Tanad's rocky fore.
They are sobbing—Nuala, Nuala,
Ulster is no more!—
Voice on voice sobs—Nuala, Nuala;
Ulster is no more!

## 1607

## CHIEFTAIN OF TYRCONNELL

By Alfred Percival Graves

SORE misery to Erin that you spread
Your sails for far-off Espan, Hugh the Red!
But sorest doom that on a foreign strand
Quenched your keen eye and from your falt'ring hand
Struck down the faithful brand.

[1] "*The homeless chieftains home again.*" The ship containing the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell sailed from Lough Swilly to Spain, but was driven by adverse winds so far south along the western coast that Croach Patrick could be seen.

Who now for us shall sweep the cattle spoil
In bellowing tumult o'er the foamy Foyle ?
And till the steers are driv'n dispersed to sward,
Hurl back, like thee, the Avenger from the ford,
Hugh O'Donnell of the Sword ?

Who now upon the plunderers from the Pale
Shall wreak the fiery vengeance of the Gael ?
With sudden onslaught strike the Saxon crew
And smite them, as you smote them, through and through—
Chieftain of Tyrconnell, who ?

Last, who like thee, with comforts manifold
Shall keep and cherish sick, and poor, and old ?
For, ah ! thy open ever-flowing store
Of food and drink and clothing, meat galore,
Fails them now, for evermore.

# THE FOURTH PERIOD

## FROM THE FLIGHT OF THE EARLS TO THE REBELLION OF PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD. A.D. 1607 TO A.D. 1745

# THE FOURTH PERIOD

*From the Flight of the Earls to the Rebellion of Prince Charles Edward. A.D.* 1607 *to A.D.* 1745

## TRANSPLANTED

By William O'Neill

After the attainder and flight of the great Earls, their possessions were seized by the Crown, and the Pale was thus augmented by the addition of six northern counties, and King James I began the Plantation of Ulster. As the following poem shows this policy was also carried out in other parts of Ireland, notably in Leix, whose noble families, the O'More's and O'Lalors, were, says the author in a note, "transferred to the mountains of Kerry to make room for Saxon planters whose descendants still retain possession of their ill-gotten property.

AMONG the wilds of Kerry when night is on the peaks,
And but the curlew wakens the silence of the Reeks,
I listen for the slogan that stirred the glens afar
When Leix was Eire's vanguard and youth glowed like a star.

But vain I wait and listen for Rory Og[1] is dead,
And in the halls of Dunamase a Saxon rules instead,
And o'er his fruitful acres the stranger now is lord
Where since the days of Cuchorb a proud O'Moore kept ward.

I love those grand old mountains, yet they are naught to me
When dreams of home come crowding here by the western sea,
For then Ard Eirinn pushes its forehead to the sky
And shuts out from my vision the towering summits nigh.

[1] Rory Oge O'More died 1578. Dunamase was the O'Mores' castle in Queen's County.

I, snowy haired O'Lalor, can feel the hot blood pass
At memory of the morning when o'er the dewy grass
We hied us to the hosting on Gaillne's sunny plain,
When Clan O'Byrne was mustering to meet the foe again.

God ! how our bosoms bounded when 'neath the flags unfurled
Against the Saxon cravens our headlong strength we hurled,
And marking Cosby's butchers amid the battle smoke,
For Mullaghmast and vengeance we thro' them madly broke.

And at the chieftain's shoulder in many a midnight raid
When on the startled settlers we direful havoc made,
My skian dealt death around it as forth and out it flashed
And, scorning all obstruction, thro' helm and corselet crashed.

But time has touched the arm and dulled the skian with rust,
While here I pine, an exile, and dream because I must.
No more the joy of battle by Barrow's side to know,
Nor wrestle at the Tourney as in the long ago.

No more in dear old Dysart I'll share the jovial feast,
Nor dance the rinnke fada[1] to smile of chief and priest.
For in the soil of Kerry my mouldering bones shall lie
Before the summer dawnings flush all the Eastern sky.

[1] rinnke fada means long dance.

## 1626

## KING CHARLES'S GRACES

By Aubrey de Vere

In 1626 "a deputation from the principal nobility and gentry of Ireland waited on the King (Charles I) and offered a voluntary contribution of £120,000 to be paid in three years in return for civil and religious liberty." Fifty-one concessions were demanded; "they were denominated 'Graces' and were in the nature of a 'Petition of Right'".—Walpole. The King graciously granted the petition; £40,000, the first instalment of the subsidy, was cheerfully paid and Parliament was summoned to give the force of law to the King's concession. Care, however, was taken by the King and his friends that Parliament should meet without having fulfilled the provisions of Poynings Act; thus it was merely an illegal assembly and could do nothing. In this way King Charles I gained £40,000, which he sorely needed, at the trifling expense of his honour, and the Catholics of Ireland remained under the bondage of the Penal Laws.

THUS babble the strong ones, "The chain is slacken'd,
Ye can turn half round on your side to sleep!
With the thunder-cloud still your isle is blacken'd;
But it hurls no bolt upon tower or steep.
Ye are slaves in name: old laws proscribe you;
But the King is kindly, the Queen is fair;
They are knaves or fools who would goad or bribe you
A legal freedom to claim! Beware!"

We answer thus: Our country's honour
To us is dear as our country's life!
That stigma the foul law casts upon her
Is the brand on the fame of a blameless wife!
Once more we answer: From honour never
Can safety long time be found apart:
The bondsman that vows not his bond to sever
Is a slave by right and a slave in heart!

## 1630

## O'HUSSEY'S ODE TO THE MAGUIRE

*Translated by* J. C. MANGAN

One of Mangan's finest pieces, and refers to the famous Hugh Maguire, chief of Fermanagh. Hugh went on some expedition during which he encountered unusually inclement weather. O'Hussey was the family bard of the Maguires, and lived in the early years of the seventeenth century.

WHERE is my Chief, my Master, this bleak night *mavrone?*
O cold, cold, miserably cold is this bleak night for Hugh.
Its showery, arrowy, speary sleet pierceth one through and through,
Pierceth one to the very bone!

Rolls real thunder? Or, was that red livid light
Only a meteor? I scarce know; but, through the midnight dim
The pitiless ice-wind streams. Except the hate that persecutes him
Nothing hath crueller venomy might.

An awful, a tremendous night is this meseems!
The floodgates of the rivers of heaven, I think, have been burst wide—
Down from the overcharged clouds, like unto headlong ocean's tide,
Descends grey rain in roaring streams.

Though he were even a wolf ranging the round green woods,
Though he were even a pleasant salmon in the unchangeable sea,
Though he were a wild mountain eagle, he could scarce bear, he,
This sharp sore sleet, these howling floods.

O, mournful is my soul this night for Hugh Maguire!
Darkly, as in a dream, he strays! Before him and behind
Triumphs the tyrannous anger of the wounding wind,
The wounding wind that burns as fire!

It is my bitter grief—it cuts me to the heart—
That in the country of Clan Darry this should be his fate!
Oh, woe is me, where is he? Wandering, houseless, desolate,
Alone, without or guide, or chart!

Medreams I see just now his face, the strawberry bright
Uplifted to the blackened heavens, while the tempestuous winds
Blow fiercely over and round him, and the smiting sleet-shower blinds
The hero of Galang to-night!

Large, large affliction unto me and mine it is,
That one of his majestic bearing, his fair, stately form,
Should thus be tortured and o'erborne—that this unsparing storm
Should wreak its wrath on head like his!

That his great hand, so oft the avenger of the oppressed,
Should this chill, churlish night, perchance, be paralyzed by frost,
While through some icicle-hung thicket—as one lorn and lost—
He walks and wanders without rest.

The tempest-driven torrent deluges the mead,
It overflows the low banks of the rivulets and ponds—
The lawns and pasture-grounds lie locked in icy bonds
So that the cattle cannot feed.

The pale bright margins of the streams are seen by none.
Rushes and sweeps along the untameable flood on every side—
It penetrates and fills the cottagers' dwellings far and wide—
Water and land are blent in one.

Through some dark woods, 'mid bones of monsters, Hugh now strays,
As he confronts the storm with anguished heart but manly brow—
Oh! what a sword-wound to that tender heart of his were now
A backward glance at peaceful days!

But other thoughts are his—thoughts that can still inspire
With joy and an onward-bounding hope the bosom of Mac-Nee—
Thoughts of his warriors charging like bright billows of the sea
Borne on the wind's wings, flashing fire!

And though frost glaze to-night the clear dew of his eyes,
And white ice-gauntlets glove his noble, fine, fair fingers o'er,
A warm dress is on him, that lightning garb he ever wore,
The lightning of the soul, not skies.

Avran

Hugh marched forth to the fight—I grieved to see him so depart;
And lo! to-night he wanders frozen, rain-drenched, sad, betrayed—
But the memory of the lime-white mansions his right hand hath laid
In ashes warms the hero's heart!

## 1641

## BRIAN BOY MAGEE

### By Ethna Carbery

**As King Charles I. was having trouble with his parliament, he required his English army for his own support, so he sent a Scotch army to Ireland, under General Monroe. Monroe took up his quarters in Carrikfergus Castle, and signalized his arrival by the brutal massacre of Island Magee. At the lowest computation thirty families were slaughtered.**

I AM Brian Boy Magee—
My father was Eoghain Bán—
I was wakened from happy dreams
By the shouts of my startled clan;
And I saw through the leaping glare
That marked where our homestead stood,
My mother swing by her hair—
And my brothers lie in their blood.

In the creepy cold of the night[1]
The pitiless wolves came down—
Scotch troops from that Castle grim
Guarding Knockfergus Town;
And they hacked and lashed and hewed
With musket and rope and sword,
Till my murdered kin lay thick
In pools by the Slaughter Ford.

I fought by my father's side,
And when we were fighting sore
We saw a line of their steel
With our shrieking women before;
The red-coats drove them on
To the verge of the Gobbins grey,
Hurried them—God! the sight!
As the sea foamed up for its prey.

[1] It was in November.

Oh, tall were the Gobbins cliffs,
  And sharp were the rocks, my woe!
And tender the limbs that met
  Such terrible death below;
Mother and babe and maid,
  They clutched at the empty air
With eyeballs widened in fright
  That hour of despair.

(Sleep soft in your heaving bed,
  O little fair love of my heart!
The bitter oath I have sworn
  Shall be of my life a part;
And for every piteous prayer
  You prayed on your way to die,
May I hear an enemy plead
  While I laugh and deny.)

In the dawn that was gold and red,
  Ay, red as the blood-choked stream.
I crept to the perilous brink—
  Great Christ! was the night a dream?
In all the Island of Gloom
  I only had life that day—
Death covered the green hill-sides,
  And tossed in the Bay.

I have vowed by the pride of my sires—
  By my mother's wandering ghost—
By my kinsfolk's shattered bones
  Hurled on the cruel coast—
By the sweet dead face of my love,
  And the wound in her gentle breast—
To follow that murderous band,
  A sleuth-hound who knows no rest.

I shall go to Phelim O'Neill[1]
With my sorrowful tale and crave
A blue-bright blade of Spain,
In the ranks of his soldiers brave.
And God grant me the strength to wield
That shining avenger well—
When the Gael shall sweep his foe
Through the yawning gates of Hell.

I am Brian Boy Magee!
And my creed is a creed of hate;
Love, Peace, I have cast aside—
But Vengeance, *Vengeance*, I wait!
Till I pay back the four-fold debt
For the horrors I witnessed there,
When my brothers moaned in their blood
And my mother swung by her hair.

## 1640

## RORY O'MOORE

### By W. Drennan

"Rory O'More was the representative of the ancient house of the O'Moores of Leix, which had been well-nigh exterminated in the plantation of Queen's County. He had passed some years on the Continent, where he had been very intimate with the titular young Earl of Tyrone, Hugh's only surviving son. He had secretly enlisted Lord Maguire Baron of Inniskillen, who had been restored to a portion of the Maguire estates in Fermanagh; Sir Phelim O'Neil of Kinard . . . and Richard Plunkett, a gentleman of the Pale. They were soon joined by several gentlemen of the ancient septs of the north. . . . The plan of acton decided on was . . . to seize Dublin Castle. . . . Simultaneously the forts and garrison towns in the north were to be surprised. . . . The whole enterprise was to be carried out with as little bloodshed as possible . . . . The expressed object of the movement was (1) to compel the King to re-establish the Roman Catholic Religion, (2) to repeal Poyning's Act, and (3) to restore the confiscated estates."[2]

ON the green hills of Ulster the white cross waves high,
And the beacon of war throws its flames to the sky;
For the taunt and the threat let the coward endure,
Our hope is in God and in Rory O'Moore!

[1] Sir Phelim O'Neill, who commanded the rebel forces in the early period of the rebellion and who was executed by the Cromwellians in 1653.
[2] From *The Kingdom of Ireland*, by Charles George Walpole.

Do you ask why the beacon and banner of war
On the mountains of Ulster are seen from afar?
'Tis the signal our rights to regain and secure,
Through God and our Lady and Rory O'Moore.

For the merciless Scots, with their creed and their swords,
With war in their bosoms, and peace in their words,
Have sworn the bright light of our faith to obscure,
But our hope is in God and in Rory O'Moore.

Oh! lives there the traitor who'd shrink from the strife—
Who to add to the length of a forfeited life,
His country, his kindred, his faith would abjure?—
No! we'll strike for our God and for Rory O'Moore.

1641

## MACMAHON'S DEFIANCE

By James M. McCane

*Scene.* Council Chamber, Dublin Castle

It will be remembered that in O'More's great rising, fixed for October 23, 1641, Dublin Castle was to be seized simultaneously with the forts in the north. Unfortunately, in a convivial moment, Colonel Hugh MacMahon, one of the leaders in Dublin, spoke of the plans in the presence of one, Owen Connolly, who betrayed the plot to the Government. It was frustrated, and MacMahon was seized. He behaved gallantly in presence of his judges.

BY Heaven, that hateful name is false! no "traitor's" soul have I;
Not mine to blush for "craven crimes"—not mine "the dread to die;"
And though a captive here I stand within these Dublin towers,
I swear we fight for King and right—a holy cause is ours:
Even here I fling your tauntings back—I fling them in your face—
Dark picture, Parsons, of your heart—a tell-tale of your race.
Lords—Justices! misnamed—my tongue your perfidy shall brand,
Betrayers of your prince's cause, and robbers of the land!

I dare your worst—your rope, your block, no terrors have
for me,
For the hour that saw these hands enchained, that hour saw
Ireland free.

Ay, bear me hence!—what boots it now if I should live or
die?
Thank God! the long-sought hour is come—our banners
kiss the sky!
Albeit a worthless tool is broke—'tis hallowed in the deed!
Thank God that Ireland's cause is safe,—that I for Ireland
bleed!
Ay, bear me to the bloody block—nor need ye waste your
light,
For Ulster all ablaze, my lords, shall be our torch to-night;
Each Saxon tower that frowned upon our country's plundered
fanes
Shall light its felon lord, ere dawn, to dastard flight or chains;
Shall guide the steps of gathering clans whose watchwords
rend the sky.
O God! it is a happy death on such a night to die.

Clan-Connal's outlawed sons rush down o'er cliff and rugged
rock—
Than Erna's flood at Assaroe, more fierce and dread their
shock:
As storm-clouds driven o'er summer's sky, Maguire's shat-
tered clan
Shall sweep from Erna's hundred isles and clutch their own
again.
A thunderbolt that cleaves the heavens with scathing levin
bright,
Clan-Nial's gathering masses burst o'er tower and town to-
night;
O'Hanlon builds his eyrie strong in Tanderagee's old town;
O'Reilly raises Brefni's kernes; Magennis musters Down;

And though not mine the glorious task my rightful clan to lead,
Clan-Mahon shall not want a chief to teach it how to bleed!

Ha! wherefore shakes that craven hand—Lord Justice Parsons, say?
Why stare so stark, my Lord Borlase?[1]—why grow so pale, I pray.
Methought you deemed it holy work to fleece "the Philistine";
That in "God's name" you taxed belief in many a goodly fine;
Then wherefore all these rueful looks?—"the Lord's work ye have done"!
Advance the lights! Ha! vampire lords, your evil race is run.
Ye traitors to a trusting prince! ye robbers of his realm!
Small wonder that the ship's adrift with pirates at the helm!
Hark! heard'st that shout that rang without? Ye ministers of ill,
Haste, sate ye with your latest crime while yet you've time to kill!

I dare your worst, you Saxon knaves! then wherefore do you pause?
My blood shall rouse the Southern clans, though prostrate in our cause!
For as the resurrection flower, though withered many a year,
Blooms fresh and bright and fair again when watered with a tear,
So, nurtured in the willing wave of a martyr's ruddy tide,
Our sons shall say—The Nation lived when Hugh MacMahon died!

[1] Parsons and Borlase were the Lords Justices.



SIR CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY

## 1641

## THE MUSTER OF THE NORTH

By Sir Charles Gavan Duffy

This ballad is an expression of the fierce spirit of revenge stirred up in the north by the cruelties and excesses of the Scotch and English troops—a spirit which could not be calmed even by the endeavours of the priests until the price of blood was paid. Excited thus, Phelim O'Neill and his followers were responsible for much bloodshed.

JOY! joy! the day is come at last, the day of hope and pride,
And see! our crackling bonfires light old Bann's rejoicing tide,
And gladsome bell, and bugle-horn from Newry's captured towers,
Hark! how they tell the Saxon swine, this land is ours, Is OURS!

Glory to God! my eyes have seen the ransomed fields of Down,
My ears have drunk the joyful news, "Stout Phelim hath his own."
Oh! may they see and hear no more, oh! may they rot to clay,
When they forget to triumph in the conquest of to-day.

Now, now we'll teach the shameless Scot to purge his thievish maw,
Now, now the courts may fall to pray, for Justice is the Law,
Now shall the Undertaker [1] square, for once, his loose accounts.
*We'll* strike, brave boys, a fair result, from all his false amounts.

[1] In the Plantation of the different provinces of Ireland the large estates confiscated from patriot Irish chiefs were bestowed on English and Scotch "younger sons" who *undertook* to provide one foot and one horse soldier for every hundred acres, and also to divide their land into small holdings and colonize these with English, and to employ none but English artizans and labourers, preventing them from amalgamating with the native Irish. These new landholders thus gained the title of "Undertakers," and it is not hard to realize the bitter hatred that went with the name.

Come, trample down their robber rule, and smite its venal spawn,
Their foreign laws, their foreign Church, their ermine, and their lawn;
With all the specious fry of fraud that robbed us of our own,
And plant our ancient laws again beneath our lineal throne.

Our standard flies o'er fifty towers, o'er twice ten thousand men,
Down have we plucked the pirate Red, never to rise again;
The Green alone shall stream above our native field and flood—
The spotless Green, save where its folds are gemmed with Saxon blood!

Pity! no, no, you dare not, Priest[1]—not you, our Father, dare
Preach to us now that godless creed—the murderers' blood to spare;
To spare his blood, while tombless still our slaughter'd kin implore,
"Graves and revenge" from Gobbin Cliffs and Carrick's bloody shore![2]

Pity! could we "forget—forgive," if we were clods of clay,
Our martyr'd priests, our banish'd chiefs, our race in dark decay,
And worse than all—you know it, Priest—the daughters of our land,
With wrongs we blushed to name until the sword was in our hand!

[1] See "The Intercession," by Aubrey de Vere, given below.
[2] The scene of the massacre of Island Magee.

Pity ! well, if you needs must whine, let pity have its way,
Pity for all our comrades true, far from our side to-day.
The prison-bound who rot in chains, the faithful dead who poured
Their blood 'neath Temple's lawless axe or Parson's ruffian sword.

They smote us with the swearer's oath, and with the murderer's knife,
We in the open field will fight, fairly for land and life ;
But by the Dead and all their wrongs, and by our hopes to-day
One of us twain shall fight their last, or be it we or they !

They bann'd our faith, they bann'd our lives, they trod us into earth,
Until our very patience stirred their bitter hearts to mirth ;
Even this great flame that wraps them now, not *we* but *they* have bred,
Yes, this is their own work, and now, THEIR WORK BE ON THEIR HEAD.

Nay, Father, tell us not of help from Leinster's Norman peers,
If we but shape our holy cause to match their selfish fears,—
Helpless and hopeless be their cause who brook no vain delay.
Our ship is launched, our flag's afloat, whether they come or stay.

Let Silken Howth, and savage Slane still kiss their tyrant's rod,
And pale Dunsany still prefer his Master to his God,
Little we'd miss their fathers' sons, the Marchmen of the Pale,
If Irish hearts and Irish hands had Spanish blade and mail ?

Then let them stay to bow and fawn, or fight with cunning words ;
I fear me more their courtly acts than England's hireling swords,
Natheless their creed they hate us still, as the Despoiler hates ;
Could they love us, and love their prey, our kinsmen's lost estates ?

Our rude array's a jagged rock to smash the spoiler's power,
Or need we aid, His aid we have who doomed this gracious hour ;
Of yore He led His Hebrew host to peace through strife and pain,
And us He leads the selfsame path, the selfsame goal to gain.

Down from the sacred hills whereon a SAINT[1] communed with God,
Up from the Vale where Bagnall's blood manured the reeking sod,
Out from the stately woods of Truegh, McKenna's plundered home,
Like Malin's waves, as fierce and fast, our faithful clansmen come.

Then brethren *on* !—O'Neill's dear shade would frown to see you pause—
Our banished Hugh, our martyred Hugh, is watching o'er your cause—
His generous error lost the land—he deemed the Norman true.
Oh ! forward ! friends, it must not lose the land again in you !

[1] St. Patrick, whose favourite retreat was Lecale, in the County Down.

## 1641

## THE INTERCESSION

### By Aubrey de Vere

**It is an undoubted fact that, in the rising of 1641 many atrocities were committed by the excited Irish, under Phelim O'Neill, with the memory of English cruelties fresh in their minds. The following poem shows that the priests, at least, did all that in them lay to calm the fiery passions of their flocks, though too often unsuccessfully.**

IRIEL the Priest arose and said,
"The just cause never shall prosper by wrong!
The ill cause fattens on blood ill shed;
'Tis Virtue only makes Justice strong.

"I have hidden the Sassanach's wife and child
Beneath the altar; behind the porch;
O'er them that believe not these hands have piled
The copes and the vestments of holy Church!

"I have hid three men in a hollow oak;
I have hid three maids in an ocean cave":
As though he were lord of the thunder stroke
The old Priest lifted his hand—to save.

But the peop e loved not the words he spake;
And their face was changed for their heart was sore:
They spake no word; but their brows grew black,
And the hoarse halls roar'd like a torrent's roar.

"Has the Stranger robb'd you of house and land?
In battle meet h m and smite him down!
Has he sharpen'd the dagger? Lift ye the brand!
Has he bound your Princes? Set free the clown!

"Has the Stranger his country and knighthood shamed?
Though he 'scape God's vengeance so shall not ye!
*His own* God chastens! Be never named
With the Mullaghmast slaughter! Be just and free!"

But the people received not the words he spake,
For the wrong on their heart had made it sore;
And their brows grew black like the stormy rack,
And the hoarse halls roar'd like the wave-wash'd shore.

Then Iriel the Priest put forth a curse!
And horror crept o'er them from vein to vein;
A curse upon man and a curse upon horse,
As forth they rode to the battle-plain.

And there never came to them luck or grace,
No saint in the battle-field help'd them more,
Till O'Neil [1] who hated the war-fare base
Had landed at Doe on Tirconnell's shore.

## 1641

### DONAL MAC SEAGHAIN [2] NA MALLACHT

By Ethna Carbery

Donal Mac Shan of the Curses took the garrison of Liscallaghan, October 23, 1641.

"DONAL Mac Seaghain Na Mallacht,
Sign the cross on your lips and breast
Before you go into the battle
Where, maybe, you'll find your rest.

"And sign 't on brow of blackness,
Loved vein of my heart, my son,
That the bitter hate may leave you
And the bitter words be done.

[1] Owen Roe O'Neill.
[2] *Pronounce* Seaghain as Shawn.

"For a grief is ever with me—
Dark sorrow without shine—
That Dona' Mac Seaghain of the Curses
Should be name on son of mine."

He took the hands of his mother
And answered in gentler wise,
Though his face was a cloud of anger
And a quenchless flame his eyes.

"For you I have only loving
Who nursed me upon your knee,
Yet, O mother, you cannot sweeten
The sights that to-day I see.

"I look on our smoking valleys,
I gaze on our wasted lands,
I stand by our grass-grown thresholds
And curse their ruffian hands.

"I curse them in dark and daylight—
I curse them the hours between
The grey dawn and shadowy night-time,
For the sights my eyes have seen.

"I curse them, awake, or sleeping,
I curse them, alive, or dead;
And, oh Christ, that my words were embers
To fall on each Saxon head.

"They have swept my land with their fury,
It is burnt where their feet have passed:
It is blighted, dishonoured, lowly
In the track of the poisonous blast.

"But Eoghan,[1] God shield him, gathers
The tall spears of the Gael—
And Donal Mac Seaghain Na Mallacht
Goes foremost to win or fail.

"Then stay me not of my curses—
When mountain and fair green glen
Are free as the Lord God meant them,
I shall pray at your bidding then."

## 1642

## AWAITING OWEN ROE

By Patrick J. McCall

In 1642, before the landing of Owen Roe, Rory O'More summoned a Parliament at Kilkenny, which petitioned the King to restore the Catholic Church in Ireland. The King promised tolerance, but nothing more. After this Rory O'More completely disappears from history. "His is one of the most honoured and stainless names in Irish history. Writers who concur in nothing else agree in representing him as a man of the loftiest motives and most passionate patriotism."—Note in Hay's *Ballads of Ireland.*

Owen Roe O'Neill was a nephew of the Earl of Tyrone, who left Ireland in 1607. He was brought up on the Continent, but was now looked for in Ireland to lead his countrymen. When he arrived he took command of the Army of the North, and severely condemned the atrocities which had been committed by his cousin Sir Phelim.

OWEN ROE has left the Flemings' town,
In the lands of Nether Spain
With many a mark, and many a crown,
For Ireland's cause, again!
With many a bar of golden ore,
And the Pope's red signet stone;
But we have here a richer store
For him in Green Tyrone!

[1] Eoghan Rua O'Neill. Better known as Owen Roe.



THOMAS DARCY M'GEE

Móreen, my Vanithee, will place
A rosary in his hand;
And young Nóreen will go and grace
His breast with ribbon band;
And my little Gilla Hugh, will lead
A steed of glossy roan;
But a kinsman's blade is my own meed
For him, in Green Tyrone!

'Round the quigal lonely spiders weave:
The spinet sleeps in dust;
And the caman rots beneath the eave;
And the plough is red with rust!
No more we spin, or sport, or toil;
For our tyrants bold have grown,
And strangers till the weeping soil
Of our heart lov'd Tyrone!

Oh, the rosary will win him grace:
The breast-knot win him love;
And the steed will fly with lightning pace,
And the sword will trusty prove!
My Móreen, pray: my Nóreen, sigh:
Go, Hugh, and feed the roan;
For soon our swords shall sweep the sky
For Ireland and Tyrone!

## 1652

## IN-FELIX FELIX

### By Thomas D'Arcy Magee

There are, of course, two sides to every question and to every character, and it is but fair to consider both. Felix, or as he is more generally known Sir Phelim O'Neill, has been very generally condemned for his ferocity and cruelty to the English settlers in the rising of 1641. But we must bear in mind the times during which he lived, and while nothing can excuse the crimes he committed, we may find much to excuse their perpetrator. "He was executed by Cromwell's order in 1652. He was offered his life on the scaffold if he would consent to inculpate King Charles. He stoutly refused, and was instantly executed.

WHY is his name unsung, oh, minstrel host?
Why do you pass his memory like a ghost?
Why is no rose, no laurel on his grave?
Was he not constant vigilant and brave?
Why, when that hero-age you deify,
Why do you pass "In-felix Felix" by?

He rose the first—he looms the morning star
Of the long glorious unsuccessful war.
England abhors him! Has she not abhorred
All who for Ireland ventured life or word?
What memory would she not have cast away,
That Ireland hugs in her heart's heart to-day?

He rose in wrath to free his fettered land.
"There's blood—there's English blood, upon his hand."
Ay, so they say!—three thousand less or more
He sent untimely to the Stygian shore—
They were the keepers of the prison-gate—
He slew them, his whole race to liberate.

Oh, clear-eyed Poets, ye who can descry,
Through vulgar heaps of dead where heroes lie—
Ye, to whose glance the primal mist is clear,
Behold there lies a trampled Noble here.

Shall we not leave a mark? Shall we not do
Justice to one so hated and so true?

If even his hand and hilt were so disdained,
If he was guilty, as he has been blamed,
His death redeemed his life—he chose to die,
Rather than get his freedom with a lie;
Plant o'er his gallant heart a laurel tree,
So may his head within the shadow be.

I mourn for thee, O hero of the North—
God judge thee gentler than we do on earth!
I mourn for thee and for our Land, because
She dare not own the martyrs in her cause.
But they are Poets, they who justify—
They will not let thy memory rot or die.

## 1646

## BATTLE OF BENBURB

### By Roger Casement

This battle was fought on June 5, 1646, between the Scots, fighting for the English Parliament and under the command of General Monroe, and the Irish under Owen Roe O'Neill. Monroe had 6,000 foot and 600 horse, O'Neill 5,000 foot and 500 horse. Both armies were well led and were trained and disciplined troops; but the Irish had the advantage of position, and the contest was well and long sustained, and ended in a great Irish victory. The Scots left more than 3,000 dead on the field. Monroe himself fled without hat or cloak to Lisburn, and baggage, cannon and military stores fell into the hands of the victors.

SINCE treason triumphed when O'Neill was forced to foreign flight,
The ancient people felt the heel of Scotch usurper's might.
The barren hills of Ulster held a race proscribed and banned,
Who from their lofty refuge view their own so fertile land.[1]

[1] These lines refer to the flight of the Earls in 1607, and the subsequent Plantation of Ulster in the reign of James I. The Catholics fled to the hills and glens of Antrim, where their descendants are Catholic to this day.

Their churches in the sunny vales, the homes that once were theirs
Torn from them and their faith to feed some canting minion's prayers.
O Lord, from many a cloudy hill then streamed our prayers to Thee,
And, like the dawn on summer hills that only watchers see,
Thy glorious hope shone on us long before the sleeping foe
Knew that their doom had broken on the sword of Owen Roe.

'Twas dawn of a fair June morning while Blackwater still drew grey
His valley'd mists about him that we saw at Killylea
The Scottish colours waving as they headed to the ford .
Where never foeman waded yet but paid it with the sword,
And fair it was to see them in the golden morning light
Climb up the hill by Caledon and turn them to the right;
And as they neared the Yellow Ford where Bagenal met O'Neill,[1]
Joy gathered in their throats and broke above the cannon's peal.
And oh ! a thrill went through our ranks, as straining to the foe
Like hounds in leash we panted for the word of Owen Roe.

Not yet :—Altho' O'Ferrell's[2] horse come riding in amain,
Not yet—altho' fierce Cunningham[3] pursues with slackened rein.
Not yet—altho' in skirmish and in many a scattered fight
We hold them. Still with waiting eye, O'Neill smiles in despite,

[1] Battle of Blackwater, 1598.
[2] *O'Ferral's horse.* Colonel Richard O'Ferral occupied a narrow pass, through which it was necessary for the Scotch troops to go. The fire of Monroe's guns, however, compelled this officer to retire.—*Story of Ireland*, A. M. Sullivan.
[3] *Fierce Cunningham.* Lieut. Colonel Cunningham, Monroe's officer, who forced O'Ferral to retreat and thus cleared the pass for the Scotch troops.

Till, slanting on our backs the sun full in their faces fell,
Then blinding axe and battle spear rose with a sudden swell.
"For God and Church and Country now, upon them every man,
But hold your strength until ye feel them scarce a pike-length's span,
Then, Red Hand ever uppermost, strike home your strongest blow!"
And with a yell our feet outsped the words of Owen Roe.

Like heaving lift of yellow wave that drags the sandy shore
On with it to its foaming fall our rushing pikemen wore.
Horse, foot, and guns and falling flags, like streamers of sea-wrack
Torn from their dripping hold on one broad swell of carnage back:
Stout Blayney's gallant horse withstood that seething tide in vain.
It bore them down, and redder raced with life blood of the slain.
One regiment only fought its way from out that ghastly fight,
And Conway slew two horses on the Newry road that night,
While Monroe fled so fast he left both hat and wig to show
How full the breeze that lifted up the flag of Owen Roe.

Ho! Ironsides of Cromwell, ye've got grimmer work to do
Than when on Naseby's ruddy morn your ready swords ye drew—
Than when your headlong charges routed Rupert's tried and best.
Ere yet the glare of battle fainted in the loyal West.
Those swords must break a stouter foe ere ye break Erin's weal
Or stamp your bloody title deeds with Erin's bloodier seal—

The dead men of Elizabeth's red reign for comrades call;
The Scots we sent to-day have need of ye to bear their pall.
There's room for undertakers [1] still and none will say ye No.
To such fair holdings, measured by the sword of Owen Roe.

Ho! Ring your bells, Kilkenny town: ho! Dublin burghers pass
In open day, with open brow, to celebrate the Mass.
The sword of state that Tudor hate laid sore on Church of God
Hath fallen here with shattered hilt and vain point in the sod.
Ho! Holy Rinuccini [2] and ye lords of the Pale
Lay by your sheets of parchment and put on your sheeted mail,
For God hath spoke in battle and His Face the foe is toward,
And ye must hold by valour still what He hath freed by sword.
Yea! God in fight hath spoken and through cloud hath bent His Bow
In wrath upon the routed, but in hope o'er Owen Roe.

## 1647

## THE GREEN FLAG

### By M. J. Barry

On the strength of the line "Charge with Eoghan for our flag of Green," we insert this cheery war-song under this date. It is sung to a stirring air once well known and popular.

BOYS! fill your glasses;
Each hour that passes
Steals, it may be, on our last night's cheer.
The day soon shall come, boys,
With fife and drum, boys,
Breaking shrilly on the so'd er's ear.

[1] See note above to "Muster of the North," by Sir Chas. Gavan Duffy.
[2] Papal Legate sent by Pope Innocent X, 1645. He was sent to aid the Confederate Irish Catholics, and brought with him from the Pope a supply of arms and money. He left Ireland in 1649, and died at Fermo in Italy, of which see he was Archbishop.

Drink the faithful hearts that love us—
'Mid to-morrow's thickest fight,
While our green flag floats above us,
Think, boys, 'tis for them we smite.
Down with each mean rag,
None but the green flag
Shall above us be in triumph seen:
O! think on its glory,
Long shrined in story,
Charge for Eire and her flag of green!

Think on old Brian,
War's mighty lion,
'Neath that banner 'twas he smote the Dane;
The Northman and Saxon
Oft turned their backs on
Those who bore it o'er each crimsoned plain.
Beal-an-Atha-Buidhe beheld it
Bagenal's fiery onset curb;
Scotch Munroe would fain have felled it—
We, boys, followed him from red Beinburb.
Down with each mean rag,
None but the green flag
Shall above us be in triumph seen:
Oh! think on its glory,
Long shrined in story,
Charge with Eoghan for our flag of green.

And if, at eve, boys,
Comrades shall grieve, boys,
O'er our corses, let it be with pride,
When thinking that each, boys,
On that red beach, boys,
Lies the flood-mark of the battle's tide.

See! the first faint ray of morning
Gilds the east with yellow light!
Hark! the bugle note gives warning—
One full bumper to old friends to-night.
Down with each mean rag,
None but the green flag
Shall above us be in triumph seen:
Oh! think on its glory,
Long shrined in story,
Fall or conquer for our flag of green!

## 1649

## LAMENT FOR OWEN ROE O'NEILL

### By Thomas Davis

*Time.* November 10, 1649. *Scene.* Ormond's Camp, Co. Waterford. *Speakers.* A Veteran of Owen O'Neill's clan and one of the horsemen, just arrived with an account of his death.

After Benburb Owen Roe was unable to pursue his victorious course in the north as he was summoned by Rinuccini to assist him in Kilkenny. From that time the Irish cause gradually weakened. Owen Roe died while on the march to attack Cromwell's army in 1649. The rumour that he was poisoned finds expression in this poem.

"DID they dare, did they dare, to slay Owen Roe O'Neill?"
"Yes, they slew with poison, him, they feared to meet with steel."
"May God wither up their hearts! May their blood cease to flow,
May they walk in living death, who poisoned Owen Roe!

'Though it break my heart to hear, say again the bitter words."
'From Derry against Cromwell, he marched to measure swords;
But the weapon of the Saxon met him on his way,
And he died at Clough-Oughter, upon St. Leonard's Day."



THOMAS OSBORNE DAVIS

Wail, wail ye for The Mighty One! Wail, wail ye for the Dead;
Quench the hearth and hold the breath—with ashes strew the head.
How tenderly we loved him! How deeply we deplore!
Holy Saviour! but to think we shall never see him more.

Sagest in the council was he—kindest in the hall,
Sure we never won a battle—'twas Owen won them all.
Had he lived—had he lived—our dear country had been free;
But he's dead, but he's dead, and 'tis slaves we'll ever be.

O'Farrell and Clanrickarde, Preston and Red Hugh,
Audley and MacMahon—ye are valiant, wise and true;
But—what, what are ye all to our darling who is gone?
The Rudder of our Ship was he, our Castle's cornerstone!

Wail, wail him through the Island! Weep, weep for our pride!
Would that on the battle-field our gallant chief had died!
Weep the Victor of Beinburb—weep him young man and old;
Weep for him, ye women—your Beautiful lies cold!

We thought you would not die—we were sure you would not go,
And leave us in our utmost need to Cromwell's cruel blow—
Sheep without a shepherd, when the snow shuts out the sky—
Oh! why did you leave us, Owen? Why did you die?

Soft as woman's was your voice, O'Neill! bright was your eye,
Oh! why did you leave us, Owen? Why did you die?
Your troubles are all over, you're at rest with God on high;
But we're slaves, and we're orphans, Owen.—why did you die?

## 1649

## THE WEXFORD MASSACRE

By M. J. Barry

"Cromwell sat before Wexford ten days parleying with the Governor on one hand, and with the inhabitants on the other." The town was betrayed by a Capt. Stafford, one of the Commissioners, and the Cromwellian troops poured in over the walls and began a slaughter equal to that of Drogheda—none were spared. There is a tradition that 200 or 300 women and children were put to death in the market place, whither they had flocked round the great stone cross which stood there."—Gen. Sir W. Butler, *Cromwell in Ireland.*

THEY knelt around the Cross divine,
The matron and the maid—
They bow'd before redemption's sign,
And fervently they prayed—
Three hundred fair and helpless ones,
Whose crime was this alone—
Their valiant husbands, sires, and sons
Had battled for their own.

Had battled bravely, but in vain—
The Saxon won the fight,
And Irish corses strewed the plain
Where Valour slept with Right.
Now now that man[1] of demon guilt
To fated Wexford flew—
The red blood reeking on his hilt,
Of hearts to Erin true!

He found them there—the young, the old—
The maiden and the wife,
Their guardians brave in death were cold
Who dared for them the strife.
They prayed for mercy—God on high!
Before *Thy* Cross they prayed,
And ruthless Cromwell bade them die
To glut the Saxon blade!

[1] Cromwell.

Three hundred fell—the stifled prayer
  Was quenched in woman's blood,
Nor youth, nor age could move to spare
  From slaughter's crimson flood.
But nations keep a stern account
  Of deeds that tyrants do;
And guiltless blood to Heaven will mount,
  And Heaven avenge it, too!

## THE "CURSE OF CROMWELL";

### OR, THE DESOLATION OF THE WEST

By Aubrey de Vere

Oliver Cromwell's visit to Ireland was, as Sir William Butler says, "a Storm which passed over Ireland 250 years ago to leave its wrecks still visible across the length and breadth of the land."—*Studies in Irish Hist., Cromwell in Ireland.*

IN trance I roamed that land forlorn
  By battle first, then famine worn;
I walked in gloom and dread.
The Land remained: the hills were there,
The vales—but few remained to share
  That realm untenanted.

Far-circling wastes, far-bending skies;
Clouds as at Nature's obsequies
  Slow trailing scarf and pall:—
In whistling winds on creaked the crane,
Grey lakes upstared from moor and plain,
  Like eyes on God that call.

Turn where I might, no blade of green
Diversified the tawny scene:
  Bushless the waste and bare:
A dusky red the hills, as though
Some deluge ebbing years ago
  Had left but seaweed there.

Dark red the vales : that single hue
O'er rotting swamps an aspect threw
  Monotonous yet grand :
Long feared—for centuries in decay—
Like a maimed lion there it lay,
  What once had been a Land.

Yet, day by day, as dropt the sun
A furnace glare through vapours dim
  Illumed each mountain's head :
Old tower and keep their crowns of flame
That hour assumed ; old years of shame
  Like fiends exorcised, fled.

That hour, from sorrow's trance awaking,
My soul, like day from darkness breaking,
  With might prophetic fired,
To these red hills and setting suns
Returned antiphonal response
  As gleam by gleam expired.

And in my spirit grew and gathered
Knowledge that Ireland's worst was weathered,
  Her last dread penance paid ;
Conviction that for earthly scath
In world-wide victories of her Faith
  Atonement should be made.

That hour, as one who walks in vision,
Of God's "New Heavens" I had fruition,
  And saw and inly burned :
And I beheld a multitude
Of those whose robes were washed in blood,
  Saw chains to sceptres turned !

And I saw Thrones, and seers thereon
Judging, and Tribes like snow that shone
And diamond towers high-piled,
Towers of that City, theirs at last,
Through tribulations who have passed,
And theirs the undefiled.

A Land becomes a monument!
Man works; but God's concealed intent
Converts his worst to best:
The first of Altars was a Tomb—
Ireland! thy gravestone shall become—
God's Altar in the West.

## 1688

## THE MAIDEN CITY

By Charlotte Elizabeth

In 1686 Richard Talbot was sent to Ireland by James II to command the army with the title of Earl of Tyrconnell, and a year later he was made Viceroy. He was a Catholic, it being the policy of James to restore to the Catholics many of their rights. Tyrconnell wished to introduce some Catholics into the corporations of the large cities. Derry absolutely refused to admit them, and when Lord Antrim was sent with 1,200 men to enforce the order, the prentices of Derry closed the gates in their faces. When the deposed King James, after landing in Ireland in 1689, marched to Derry, he was treated in the same way by the sturdy sons of the city.

WHERE Foyle his swelling waters rolls northward to the main
Here, Queen of Erin's daughters, fair Derry fixed her reign.
A holy temple crowned her, and commerce graced her street,
A rampart wall was round her, the river at her feet;
And here she sat alone, boys, and looking from the hill
Vow'd the maiden on her throne, boys, would be a maiden still.

From Antrim crossing over, in famous eighty-eight
A plumed and belted lover [1] came to the Ferry gate:
She summon'd to defend her our sires—a beardless race—
Who shouted No SURRENDER! and slamm'd it in his face.
Then in a quiet tone, boys, they told him 'twas their will
That the maiden on her throne, boys, should be a maiden still.

Next, crushing all before him, a kingly [2] wooer came,
(The royal banner o'er him, blush'd crimson deep for shame;)
He showed the Pope's commission, nor dream'd to be refused.
She pitied his condition, but begg'd to stand excused.
In short, the fact is known, boys, she chased him from the hill,
For the maiden, on her throne, boys, would be a maiden still.

On our brave sires descending, 'twas then the tempest broke,
Their peaceful dwellings rending, 'mid blood and flame and smoke.
That hallow'd graveyard yonder swells with the slaughter'd dead—
Oh! brothers! pause and ponder, it was for *us* they bled;
And while their gift we own, boys,—the fane that tops our hill,
Oh, the maiden on her throne, boys, shall be a maiden still.

Nor wily tongue shall move us, nor tyrant arm affright,
We'll look to One above us Who ne'er forsook the right;
Who will, may couch and tender the birthright of the free,
But, brothers, No SURRENDER, no compromise for me!
We want no barrier stone, boys, no gates to guard the hill,
Yet the maiden on her throne, boys, shall be a maiden still.

[1] Lord Antrim with 1,200 soldiers in 1688.
[2] James II in 1689.

## 1690

## THE REQUITAL

By Aubrey de Vere

There was a Catholic Parliament in 1690. This poem illustrates the contrast between the way in which the Catholics treated their fellow-countrymen who differed from them in religion when they were in power, and the treatment the Protestants meted out to the Catholics when they were in similar circumstances. The full story is told in Thomas Davis's book, *The Patriot Parliament of* 1690.

WE too had our day—it was brief: it is ended—
When a king dwelt among us; no strange king, but ours!
When the shout of a People delivered ascended
And shook the broad banner that hung on his towers.
We saw it like trees in a summer breeze shiver;
We read the gold legend that blazoned it o'er;
"To-day!—now or never! To-day and for ever!"
O God, have we seen it to see it no more?

How fared it that season, our lords and our masters,
In that Spring of our freedom how fared it with you?
Did we trample your Faith? Did we mock your disasters?
We restored but his own to the leal and the true.
Ye had fallen! 'Twas a season of tempest and troubles:
But against you we drew not the knife you had drawn;
In the war-field we met; but your prelates and nobles
Stood up 'mid the senate in ermine and lawn!

## 1690

## THE LAST STRUGGLE

### By Aubrey de Vere

James II landed at Kinsale in 1689. He called a Parliament in Dublin, which repealed all the laws obnoxious to the Catholics and to the liberty of the nation, and then marched to the siege of Derry. We have already told of his reception there. The siege lasted 105 days, and the inhabitants were in the greatest extremities, when three English ships from William's fleet broke the boom across the harbour and relieved the city. James then retreated to Strabane. "Thus the struggle began—a conflict in its origin more British than Irish between the Stuart cause supported by the Catholic Celts and aided by France on the one side and the Protestant Colonists supported by the reigning dynasty of England on the other."—Collier.

A CROWNLESS King stands up,
That King the knaves traduce.
His lineage springs from Irish Kings,
Through Kenneth and through Bruce.
Our strength, our hope, are past;
Our faith, our truth remain;
With James is right; for James we'll fight
'Gainst Dutchman and 'gainst Dane.

They hate him well, those Dutch,
For on their necks he trod!
He fired their tallest ships and dyed
The green sea with their blood.
'Twas treason laid him low—
Children his bread who brake—
The Saxon spurns that English King
The Gael will not forsake.

Who calls him Tyrant? They,
Those traitors foiled long since,
That strove to snatch his future crown
From England's patriot Prince!
What plea was theirs that day?
What crime was his? His Faith!
Despite their laws we'll fight his cause,
And fight it to the death.

His grandsire filched our lands:
  His father pawned his pledge:
His brother doled us doubtful words
  That wore a double edge:
In James we found at need
  Small love and succour none:
Not less we propped the father's right;
  We'll not desert the son.

## 1690

## THE BATTLE OF THE BOYNE

By Colonel Blacker

"The Battle of the Boyne," says Standish O'Grady, "was one of the decisive battles of the world. The Battle of the Boyne proved that the Stuart dynasty could not be sustained by Irish loyalty and valour, proved that the house of Stuart was doomed. . . .

"The Jacobites were fairly beaten by vastly superior numbers, as the bravest soldiers often must be, but they retreated in perfectly good order . . . on Dublin, presenting always a rear so solid and minatory that the victorious Williamites did not dare to attack it at any point."—*Story of Ireland.*

The battle was fought on July 1, 1690. The alteration of the Calendar is responsible for the Orange celebration being held on the 12th.

IT was upon a summer's morn, unclouded rose the sun,
  And lightly o'er the waving corn their way the breezes won;
Sparkling beneath that orient beam, 'mid banks of verdure gay,
Its eastward course a silver stream held smilingly away.

A kingly host upon its side a monarch camp'd around,
Its southern upland far and wide their white pavilions crowned;
Not long the sky unclouded show'd nor long beneath the ray
That gentle stream in silver flowed, to meet the new-born day.

Through yonder fairy-haunted glen, from out that dark ravine
Is heard the tread of marching men, the gleam of arms is seen;

And, plashing forth, in bright array along yon verdant banks,
All eager for the coming fray, are rang'd the martial ranks.

Peals the loud gun—its thunders boom the echoing vales along,
While curtain'd in its sulph'rous gloom moves on the gallant throng;
And foot and horse in mingled mass, regardless all of life,
With furious ardour onward pass to join the deadly strife.

Nor strange that with such ardent flame, each glowing heart beats high,
Their battle-word was William's name and "Death or Liberty!"
Then Oldbridge, then, thy peaceful bowers with sounds unwonted rang,
And Tredagh,[1] 'mid thy distant towers, was heard the mighty clang.

The silver stream is crimson'd wide, and clogg'd with many a corse,
As, floating down its gentle tide come mingled man and horse.
Now fiercer grows the battle's rage, the guarded stream is cross'd,
And furious, hand to hand engage each bold contending host;

He falls—the veteran hero [2] falls, renowned along the Rhine—
And *he* [3] whose name, while Derry's walls endure shall brightly shine.
Oh! would to heaven that Churchman bold, his arms with triumph blest
The soldier spirit had controll'd that fir'd his pious breast.

[1] Tredagh, the old name for Drogheda.
[2] Duke Schomberg.
[3] Walker, the gallant defender of Derry.

And he, the chief of yonder brave and persecuted band,
Who foremost rush'd amid the wave, and gain'd the hostile strand;
He bleeds—brave Caillemotte—he bleeds—'tis clos'd, his bright career,
Yet still that band to glorious deeds his dying accents cheer.

And now that well contested strand successive columns gain,
While backward James's yielding band are borne across the plain.
In vain the sword green Erin draws, and life away doth fling—
Oh! worthy of a better cause and of a bolder King.

In vain thy bearing bold is shown upon that blood-stain'd ground;
Thy tow'ring hopes are overthrown, thy choicest fall around.
Nor, shamed, abandon thou the fray, nor blush, though conquer'd there.
A power against thee fights to-day, no mortal arm may dare.

Nay, look not to that distant height in hope of coming aid—
The dastard thence hath ta'en his flight, and left thee all betray'd.
Hurrah! hurrah! the victor shout is heard on high Donore;
Down Platten's vale, in hurried rout, thy shatter'd masses pour.

But many a gallant spirit there retreats across the plain
Who, change but Kings, would gladly dare that battlefield again.
Enough! enough! the victor cries; your fierce pursuit forbear,
Let grateful prayer to heaven arise, and vanquish'd freemen spare!

Hurrah ! hurrah ! for liberty ! for her the sword we drew
And dar'd the battle while on high our Orange banners flew
Woe worth the hour—woe worth the state when men shall cease to join
With grateful hearts to celebrate the glories of the Boyne.

## THE RIVER BOYNE

By Thomas d'Arcy Magee

CHILD of Lough Ramor, gently seaward stealing,
In thy placid depths hast thou no feeling
Of the stormy gusts of other days ?
Does thy heart, oh ! gentle nun-faced river,
Passing Schomberg's obelisk, not quiver,
While the shadow on thy bosom weighs ?

Thou hast heard the sounds of martial clangour,
Seen fraternal forces clash in anger,
In thy Sabbath Valley, River Boyne !
Here have ancient Ulster's hardy forces
Dressed their ranks and fed their travelled horses,
Tara's hosting as they rode to join.

Forgettest thou that silent summer morning,
When William's bugles sounded sudden warning,
And James's answered chivalrously clear !
When rank to rank gave the death-signal duly,
And volley answered volley quick and truly,
And shouted mandates met the eager ear ?

The thrush and linnet fled beyond the mountains,
The fish in Inver Colpa sought their fountains,
The unchased deer scampered through Tredagh's gates ;[1]
St. Mary's bells in their high places trembled,
And made a mournful music which resembled
A hopeless prayer to the unpitying Fates.

Ah ! well for Ireland had the battle ended
When James forsook what William well defended,
Crown, friends and kingly cause ;
Well, if the peace thy bosom did recover
Had breathed its benediction broadly over
Our race and rites and laws.

Not in thy depths, not in thy fount, Lough Ramor !
Were brewed the bitter strife and cruel clamour
Our wisest long have mourned ;
Foul Faction falsely made thy gentle current
To Christian ears a stream and name abhorrent,
And all thy waters into poison turn'd.

But, as of old God's Prophet sweetened Mara,
Even so, blue bound of Ulster and of Tara,
Thy waters to our Exodus gave life ;
Thrice holy hands thy lineal foes have wedded,
And healing olives in thy breast embedded,
And banished for the littleness of strife.

Before thee we have made a solemn Fœdus,
And for Chief Witness called on Him Who made us,
Quenching before His eyes the brands of hate ;
Our pact is made, for brotherhood and union
For equal laws to class and to communion—
Our wounds to staunch—our land to liberate.

[1] Drogheda's gates.

Our trust is not in musket or in sabre—
Our faith is in the fruitfulness of labour,
The soul-stirred willing soil;
In Homes and granaries by justice guarded,
In fields from blighting winds and agents warded
In franchised skill and manumitted toil.

Grant us, O God, the soil and sun and seasons!
Avert despair, the worst of moral treasons,
Make vaunting words be vile.
Grant us, we pray, but wisdom, peace, and patience,
And we will yet re-lift among the nations
Our fair and fallen, but unforsaken Isle.

## 1690

## SCHOMBERG

### By William Archer

Schomberg was born in 1618 at Schomburg Castle on the Rhine, served for a time in the Swedish army, fighting much in the Thirty Years' War. Subsequently he entered the Dutch army, after which he served in the French army from 1650 to 1685, becoming a Marshal of France. As a Protestant he left France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1686), and then took service with William of Orange. He fell at the Boyne at a spot now marked by his monument.

GLORY illumes with holy light
The memory of the brave;
And laurel leaves, fresh, green, and bright
Adorn the hero's grave.
But none more nobly fell in fight
Or Freedom's sword did wave
Than William's true and gallant knight—
Schomberg the bold and brave.

Europe beheld his bright career
In gallant chivalry,
And victory blessed his martial sphere
With immortality.
But oh, at Boyne for ever famed
He fell beside the wave,
While glory's trumpet-blast proclaimed—
Schomberg the bold and brave!

Sons of the Royal Schomberg, ye
Who take that noble name,
Show in the spirit of the free
Ye honour Schomberg's fame.
Then fill the wine-cup sparkling bright,
Drink—nor one sweet drop leave—
Unto the name of freedom's knight—
Schomberg the bold and brave!

## 1690

## A BALLAD OF SARSFIELD

### OR, THE BURSTING OF THE GUNS

BY AUBREY DE VERE

This intercepting of de Ginkles' siege train on its way to Limerick is one of the most famous episodes in the career of the gallant Patrick Sarsfield. Through his mother Sarsfield was a grandson of Rory O'Moore.

SARSFIELD rode out, the Dutch to rout,
And to take and break their cannon;
To Mass went he at half-past three,
And at four he crossed the Shannon

Tyrconnel slept. In dream his thoughts
Old fields of victory ran on;
And the chieftains of Thomond in Limerick's towers
Slept well by the banks of Shannon.

He rode ten miles and he crossed the ford
And couch'd in the wood and waited;
Till, left and right on march'd in sight
That host which the true men hated.

"Charge!" Sarsfield cried; and the green hillside
As they charged replied in thunder;
They rode o'er the plain, and they rode o'er the slain
And the rebel rout lay under!

He burn'd the gear the knaves held dear—
For his King he fought, not plunder;
With powder he cramm'd the guns, and ramm'd
Their mouths the red soil under.

The spark flash'd out—like a nation's shout
The sound into heaven ascended;
The hosts of the sky made to earth reply,
And the thunders twain were blended!

Sarsfield rode out the Dutch to rout,
And to take and break their cannon;—
A century after, Scarsfield's laughter
Was echoed from Dungannon.

*Augus* 27, 1690

## THE BATTLE OF LIMERICK

By Thomas Davis

"The Irish Royalists' commander in these later stages of the war was Patrick Sarsfield, a most noble, brave, and chivalrous gentleman, tall and handsome, respected by his enemies and passionately beloved by his own soldiers." —Standish O'Grady, *Story of Ireland.*

The Siege of Limerick by William called forth as much valour as had the Siege of Derry. When William's troops were pouring into the city through the breach, the citizens rushed out, many women among them, and using any weapons or missiles they could find succeeded in repulsing the besiegers. August 27, 1690.

I

OH! hurrah for the men who when danger is nigh,
Are found in the front looking death in the eye.
Hurrah for the men who kept Limerick's wal[1],
And hurrah! for bold Sarsfield, the bravest of all.

King William's men round Limerick lay,
His cannon crashed from day to day
Till the southern wall was swept away
At the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.[1]
'Tis afternoon, yet hot the sun,
When William fires the signal gun
On the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.

II

Yet hurrah! for the men who when danger is nigh
Are found in the front looking death in the eye.
Hurrah for the men who kept Limerick's wall
And hurrah for bold Sarsfield, the bravest of all.

The breach gaped out two perches wide;
The fosse is filled, the batteries plied.
Can the Irishmen that onset bide
At the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas?

[1] *Luimneach linn-ghlas*=Limerick of the Azure River.

Across the ditch the columns dash,
Their bayonets o'er the rubbish flash,
When sudden comes a rending crash
From the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.

III

Then hurrah ! . . .
The bullets rain in pelting shower,
And rocks and beams from wall and tower.
The Englishmen are glad to cower
At the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.
But, rallied soon, again they pressed,
Their bayonets pierced full many a breast,
Till they bravely won the breach's crest
At the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.

IV

Yet hurrah ! . . .
Then fiercer grew the Irish yell,
And madly on the foe they fell,
Till the breach grew like the jaws of hell—
Not the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.
The women fought before the men ;
Each man became a match for ten,
So back they pushed the villains then
From the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.

V

Then, hurrah ! . . .
But Bradenbourg the ditch has crossed
And gained our flank at little cost—
The bastions gone—the town is lost ;
Oh ! poor city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.
When sudden Sarsfield springs the mine ;
Like rockets rise the Germans fine,
And come down dead mid smoke and shine
At the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.

VI

So, hurrah . . .
Out with a roar the Irish sprung,
And back the beaten English flung,
Till William fled, his lords among
From the city of Luimneach linn-ghlas.
'Twas thus was fought that glorious fight
By Irishmen for Ireland's right
May all such days have such a night
As the battle of Luimneach linn-ghlas.

## 1690

## WILLIAM'S FLIGHT FROM LIMERICK

By Erionnah

After the repulse on August 27, William withdrew his army, marched them into winter quarters, and himself went over to England.

I

WILLIAM came in grand array
All the way from Dublin Bay,
Swearing—Sarsfield he would slay
Or hunt him out in the morning!
O, when gallant Sarsfield heard of that
O'er his head he waved his hat,
To his good horse he gave a pat,
And spoke full proud and scorning.

*Chorus.*

Then hurray, hurray! for Freedom's fray
Flashing pikes and banners gay,
And oh! by Sarsfield's side to stay
And charge with him in the morning.

II

"Well for him he were away,
Back again by Dublin Bay,
Or that in some Dutch fog he lay
Before that welcome morning.
Now he is come to make us fly;
Strong he is, and if he try
We must run—but Saints on high!
'Twill be after him in the morning!"
Then hurray, etc.

III

William pitched his camp before
Limerick town by Shannon's shore;
He vowed "'twill run all red with gore
Of the Irish in the morning!"
But our Sarsfield took his fiery course
With his gay and gallant force—
'Come on," he said, "my Lucan horse,
We'll give him a gentle warning!"
Then hurray, etc.

IV

Right on they dashed on William's rear,
Slew his guards, blew up his gear,
Till every mountain quaked with fear
And English hearts with mourning.
But William's guns fired on the town,
Limerick's walls came tumbling down—
"Now, now," he cried, with an angry frown,
"We'll pay him back his warning!"
Yet hurray, etc.

v

Quick they mounted o'er the wall—
Down they came with a quicker fall!
"O cowards—cowards—cowards all!" [1]
Cried their King with fury burning,
For our Irish swords were far too bright—
William fled at the dead of night—
O, they feared to wait for broad daylight
And meet our men in the morning!
Then hurray, hurray! for Freedom's fray.
Flashing pikes and banners gay!
And oh, by Sarsfield's side to stay,
And charge with him in the morning!

*August* 27, 1690

## THE BLACKSMITH OF LIMERICK [2]

By Robert Dwyer Joyce

He grasped his ponderous hammer, he could not stand it more,
To hear the bombshells bursting, and the thundering battle's roar;
He said—"The breach they're mounting, the Dutchman's murdering crew—
I'll try my hammer on their heads and see what *that* can do!

"Now swarthy Ned and Moran, make up that iron well;
'Tis Sarsfield's horse that wants the shoes, so mind not shot or shell;"
"Ah, sure," cried both, "the horse can wait—for Sarsfield's on the wall,
And where you go we'll follow, with you to stand or fall!"

[1] William is said to have reproached his men for cowardice and to have envied Sarsfield his handful of gallant Irish.
[2] *Irish Minstrelsy* (Walter Scott), p. 22 (Walter Scott Publishing Co.).

The blacksmith raised his hammer and rushed into the street,
His 'prentice boys behind him, the ruthless foe to meet—
High on the breach of Limerick, with dauntless hearts they stood,
Where the bombshells burst, and shot fell thick, and redly ran the blood.

"Now look you, brown-haired Moran, and mark you, swarthy Ned,
This day we'll prove the thickness of many a Dutchman's head!
Hurrah! upon their bloody path they're mounting gallantly;
And now, the first that tops the breach, leave him to this and me!"

The first that gained the rampart, he was a captain brave!
A captain of the Grenadiers, with blood-stained dirk and glaive;
He pointed and he parried, but it was all in vain,
For fast through skull and helmet the hammer found his brain!

The next that topped the rampart, he was a colonel bold,
Bright through the murk of battle his helmet flashed with gold—
"Gold is no match for iron!" the doughty blacksmith said,
As with that ponderous hammer he cracked his foeman's head!

"Hurrah for gallant Limerick!" black Ned and Moran cried,
As on the Dutchmen's leaden heads their hammers well they plied;
A bombshell burst between them—one fell without a groan,
One leaped into the lurid air and down the breach was thrown!

"Brave smith! brave smith!" cried Sarsfield, "beware the treacherous mine—
Brave smith! brave smith! fall backward, or surely death is thine!"
The smith sprang up the rampart and leaped the blood-stained wall
As high into the shuddering air went foemen breach and all!

Up like a red volcano they thundered wild and high,
Spear, gun and shattered standard, and foemen thro' the sky;
And dark and bloody was the shower that round the black-smith fell—
He thought upon his 'prentice boys, they were avenged well!

On foemen and defenders a silence gathered down,
'Twas broken by a triumph-shout that shook the ancient town;
As out its heroes sallied, and bravely charged and slew
And taught King William and his men what Irish hearts can do!

Down rushed the swarthy blacksmith unto the river's side.
He hammered on the foe's pontoon, to sink it in the tide;
The timber it was tough and strong, it took no crack or strain—
"*Mavrone*, 'twon't break," the blacksmith cried, "I'll try their heads again!"

* * * * *

The blacksmith sought his smithy and blew his bellows strong,
He shod the steed of Sarsfield, but o'er it sang no song:
"*Ochon!* my boys are dead," he cried, "their loss I'll long deplore,
But comfort's in my heart, their graves are red with foreign gore!"

## 1691

## A BALLAD OF ATHLONE (2ND SIEGE); OR, HOW THEY BROKE DOWN THE BRIDGE

By Aubrey de Vere

When the war was renewed Ginkle besieged Athlone, which was held by St. Ruth. The gallant action described in the poem only delayed the taking of the town a short while.

DOES any man dream that a Gael can fear?—
Of a thousand deeds let him learn but one!
The Shannon swept onward broad and clear,
Between the leaguers and broad Athlone.

"Break down the bridge!"—Six warriors rushed
Through the storm of shot and the storm of shell:
With late but certain victory flushed
The grim Dutch gunners eyed them well.

They wrench'd at the planks 'mid a hail of fire:
They fell in death, their work half done:
The bridge stood fast; and nigh and nigher
The foe swarmed darkly, densely on.

"O, who for Erin will strike a stroke?
Who hurl yon planks where the waters roar?"
Six warriors forth from their comrades broke,
And flung them upon that bridge once more.

Again at the rocking planks they dashed;
And four dropped dead; and two remained:
The huge beams groaned, and the arch down-crashed;—
Two stalwart swimmers the margin gained.

St. Ruth in his stirrups stood up, and cried,
"I have seen no deed like that in France!"
With a toss of his head, Sarsfield replied,
"They had luck, the dogs! 'Twas a merry chance!"

O many a year upon Shannon's side
They sang upon moor and they sang upon heath
Of the twain that breasted that raging tide,
And the ten that shook bloody hands with Death!

*July*, 1691

## AFTER THE BATTLE (OF AUGHRIM)

By Thomas Moore

Athlone fell. St. Ruth retreated to Aughrim (in Galway), where on July 12 a decisive battle was fought. St. Ruth was slain, and the Irish utterly defeated. No quarter was given by the English, so that the battle ended in wholesale and horrible slaughter.

NIGHT closed around the conqueror's way,
And lightnings showed the distant hill,
Where those who lost that dreadful day
Stood few and faint but fearless still!
The soldier's hope, the patriot's zeal,
For ever dimmed, for ever crossed—
Oh! who shall say what heroes feel,
When all but life and honour's lost.

The last sad hour of Freedom's dream
And valour's task moved slowly by,
While mute they watched, till morning's beam
Should rise and give them light to die.
There's yet a world where souls are free,
Where tyrants taint not nature's bliss;
If death that world's bright opening be:
Oh! who wou d live a s ave in this?

## FORGET NOT THE FIELD

By Thomas Moore

FORGET not the field where they perished—
The truest, the last of the brave
All gone—and the bright hopes we cherished
Gone with them and quenched in the grave.

Oh! could we from death but recover
Those hearts as they bounded before,
In the face of high Heaven to fight over
The combat for freedom once more;

Could the chain for a moment be riven
Which Tyranny flung round us then—
No!—'tis not in man nor in Heaven,
To let Tyranny bind it again!

But 'tis past; and though blazoned in story
The name of our victor may be;
Accurst is the march of that glory
Which treads o'er the hearts of the free.

Far dearer the grave or the prison
Illumed by one patriot name,
Than the trophies of all who have risen
On Liberty's ruins to fame.

## 1691

## THE TREATY STONE OF LIMERICK

ANON.

After Aughrim the Irish retreated to Limerick, and the second siege began on August 25, 1691. On September 22 Limerck fell.

The Treaty of Limerick was signed on October 3 by Sarsfield and the Lords Justices. By it the Catholics were to be restored to the estates, rights and privileges they had enjoyed in the reign of Charles II. All the soldiers who had taken part in the war were to be allowed a free passage to France with their wives and families.

"The violation of this Treaty and the subsequent enactment of the Penal Laws is one of the most disgraceful chapters in the history of Protestantism." —Standish O'Grady.

THE Treaty-Stone of Limerick! what mem'ries of the past
Flashed through my soul, when first on it mine eyes I fondly cast!
To see it proudly standing by the lordly Shannon's flood,
And think that there for centuries the grey old stone had stood!
How breathless did I listen while my fancy heard it tell
Of all that erst, 'mid strife and storm, the olden town befel;
Since proud Le Gros' bold kinsman crossed the azure stream alone,
Til Château Renaud's[1] frigates weighed beside the Treaty Stone.

The Treaty Stone of Limerick! the monument unbuilt
Of Irish might, and Irish right—and Saxon shame and guilt—
That saw the Prince of Orange the siege obliged to raise
And leave his wounded Brandenburgs to perish in the blaze,
When the storied maids and matrons rushed fearless on the foe,
At the breach where fell their kinsmen, by the side of Boisseleau;

[1] *Château-Renaud* was in command of the French naval force sent by Louis XIV in 1691 to aid the Irish. He arrived after the Treaty of Limerick had been signed, but the Irish, faithful to their engagement, refused to renew the war.

That saw the vet'ran conqueror of Aughrim and Athlone
Forced to comply with D'Usson's terms—the aged Treaty Stone.

The Treaty Stone of Limerick! the ancient city's pride,
That oft rang loud with clash of steel, and oft with blood was dyed;
That saw the hope of Lucan's Earl[1]—his own unconquer'd band—
With stern resolve but broken hearts around it take their stand.
That saw him sign the Treaty, and saw him sign in vain;
For shamefully 'twas broken, ere the Wild Geese[2] reached the main.
That witnessed the departure and heard the wild Ochone
As Louis' ships dropped down the tide that washed the Treaty Stone.

The Treaty Stone of Limerick!—that oft, with magic charm,
Lit up in wrath the Irish heart, and nerv'd the Irish arm.
What hewed, in scores, at Fontenoy, King George's cohorts down,
But burning thoughts of thee and home—the treaty-riven town?
And oh! how Sarsfield's great heart throbb'd, on Landen's bloody field,
That fast for thee, for fatherland, his life-stream he could yield.
Thrice holier than the treasure robb'd by England's King from Scone,
Is the glory of old *Luimeneach*—the hallowed Treaty Stone!

[1] *Lucan's Earl* was Sarsfield, who was ennobled by James II.
[2] *The Wild Geese* were the Irish on the continent of Europe during the eighteenth century, and chiefly those who sailed from Ireland after the Treaty of Limerick was broken.

## THE DEATH OF SARSFIELD

### By Thomas Davis

"And so, in all that splendid and tragic array (i.e. of Ireland's champions) there is no name more cherished than that of Patrick Sarsfield, there is no figure more truly heroic, there is no man who achieved less."—Stephen Gwynn Sarsfield in *Studies in Irish History*.

I

SARSFIELD has sailed from Limerick town,
He held it long for country and crown;
And ere he yielded the Saxon swore
To spoil our homes and our shrines no more.

II

Sarsfield, and all his chivalry
Are fighting for France in the Low Countrie—
At his fiery charge the Saxons reel,
They learned at Limerick to dread his stee.

III

Sarsfield is dying on Landen's plain,
His corslet hath met the ball in vain—
As his life-blood gushes into his hand
He says: "Oh, that this were for fatherland."

IV

Sarsfield is dead—yet no tears shed we,
For he died in the arms of Victory;
And his dying words shall edge the brand
When we chase the foe from our native land!

## 1691

## THE IRISH RAPPAREES

### By Sir Ch. Gavan Duffy

Though the greater part of the Irish army and most of its officers left Ireland and took service under Louis XIV in France, after the broken Treaty of Limerick, some remained and led lives of reckless adventure, fighting for the very right to live. These were the Rapparees.

RIGH SHEMUS[1] he has gone to France and left his crown behind :—
Ill luck be theirs both day and night put runn'n' in his mind!
Lord Lucan followed after with his slashers brave and true,
And now the doleful keen is raised—"What will poor Ireland do?
What must poor Ireland do?
"Our luck," they say, "has gone to France—what *can* poor Ireland do?"

Oh! never fear for Ireland, for she has so'gers still,
For Rory's boys[2] are in the wood, and Remy's on the hill;
And never had poor Ireland more loyal hearts than these—
May God be kind and good to them, the faithful Rapparees!
The fearless Rapparees!
The jewel were you Rory with your Irish Rapparees!

Oh! black's your heart, Clan Oliver, and coulder than the clay.
Oh! high's your head, Clan Sassanach, since Sarsfield's gone away!

[1] *Righ Shemus* was James II.
[2] *Rory's boys.* The Rory in question was Redmond or Rory O'Hanlon, who led the Tories or Rapparees in his day, and who was killed in 1681.

It's little love you bear to us for sake of long ago,
But howld your hand, for Ireland still can str ke a deadly blow—
Can str ke a mortal blow—
Och ! *dhar-a-Chreesth !* 'tis she that still could str ke the deadly blow !

The master's bawn, the master's seat, a surly *bodagh* fills ;
The master's son, an outlawed man, is riding on the hills.
But God be praised, that round him throng, as thick as summer bees,
The swords that guarded Limerick wall—his loyal Rapparees !
His lovin' Rapparees !
Who dares say *no* to Rory Oge with all his Rapparees ?

Black Billy Grimes of Latnamard, he racked us long and sore—
God rest the faithful hearts he broke !—we'll never see them more !
But I'll go bail he'll break no more while Imagh has gallows trees,
For why ?—he met, one lonesome night, the fearless Rapparees !
The angry Rapparees !
They never sin no more, my boys, who cross the Rapparees !

Now, Sassanach and Cromweller, take heed of what I say—
Keep down your black and angry looks that scorn us night and day ;
For there's a just and wrathful Judge, that every action sees,
And He'll make strong to right our wrong, the faithful Rapparees !
The fearless Rapparees !
The men that rode at Sarsfield's side, the roving Rapparees !

## 1697

## THE PENAL DAYS

By Thomas Davis

England now tried to wipe out the Catholic religion altogether. "With this intent a series of acts were passed during the reigns of William and Anne, by the Irish Parliament, which were of a character quite unparalleled, and were in flagrant violation of the Treaty of Limerick."—Walpole.
Poynings Act, we must not forget, made the Irish Parliament completely dependent on the English. By these Penal Statutes Catholics could not get their children educated, they could not carry arms, the profession of the law was closed to them, they could not marry Protestants, and all ecclesiastics who were in correspondence with Rome were to be expelled. In George II's reign even more stringent laws were made against the unfortunate Catholics.

OH! weep those days, the penal days,
When Ireland hopelessly complained:
Oh! weep those days, the penal days,
When godless persecution reigned;
When, year by year,
For serf and peer,
Fresh cruelties were made by law,
And, filled with hate
Our senate sate
To weld anew each fetter's flaw.
Oh! weep those days, those penal days—
Their mem'ry still on Ireland weighs.

They bribed the flock, they bribed the son,
To sell the priest and rob the sire;
Their dogs were taught alike to run
Upon the scent of wolf and friar.
Among the poor,
Or, on the moor,
Were hid the pious and the true
While traitor knave,
And recreant slave,
Had riches, rank and retinue;
And, exiled in those penal days,
Our banners over Europe blaze.

A stranger held the land and tower
  Of many a noble fugitive;
No Popish lord had lordly power,
  The peasant scarce had leave to live
    Above his head
    A ruined shed,
  No tenure but a tyrant's will,
    Forbid to plead,
    Forbid to read,
  Disarm'd, disfranchis'd, imbecile—
What wonder if our step betrays
The freedman, born in penal days?

They're gone, they're gone, those penal days!
  All creeds are equal in our isle;
Then grant, O Lord, Thy plenteous grace
  Our ancient feuds to reconcile.
    Let all atone
    For blood and groan,
  For dark revenge and open wrong
    Let all unite
    For Ireland's right,
  And drown our griefs in Freedom's song;
Till time shall veil in twilight haze,
The memory of those Penal days.

## 1745

## FONTENOY

### By Thomas Davis

After the breaking of the Treaty of Limerick the greater number of the Irish chieftains and soldiers left Ireland, and took service under foreign kings. They were always distinguished by their bravery. The battle of Fontenoy (in Belgium) was fought on May 11, 1745, between the English and Dutch on one side, and the French, aided by the Irish exiles, on the other. The Duke of Cumberland commanded the English and Dutch, Marshal Saxe the French. Prominent leaders among the Irish were Lord Clare (O'Brien of Thomond) Dillon and Colonel Lally. The Irish contributed greatly to the victory of Saxe. The day after the battle they were specially thanked by Louis XV.

THRICE at the huts of Fontenoy, the English column failed,
And, twice, the lines of Saint Antoine, the Dutch in vain assailed;
For town and slope were filled with fort, and flanking battery,
And well they swept the English ranks and Dutch auxiliary.
As vainly, through De Barri's wood,[1] the British soldiers burst,
The French artillery drove them back diminished and dispersed.
The bloody Duke of Cumberland beheld with anxious eye,
And ordered up his last reserve, his latest chance to try.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, how fast his general's ride!
And mustering come his chosen troops, like clouds at eventide.

Six thousand English veterans in stately column tread,
Their cannon blaze in front and flank—Lord Hay is at their head;
Steady they step adown the slope—steady they climb the hill;
Steady they load,—steady they fire, moving right onward still,
Betwixt the wood and Fontenoy, as through a furnace blast,
Through rampart, trench and palisade, and bullets showering fast;

[1] *De Barri's Wood* was on the left of the French position, St. Antoine on the right.

And on the open plain above they rose and kept their course,
With ready fire and grim resolve that mocked at hostile force :
Past Fontenoy, past Fontenoy, while thinner grew their ranks—
They break, as broke the Zuyder Zee through Holland's ocean banks.

More idly than the summer flies, French tirailleurs rush round ;
As stubble to the lava tide, French squadrons strew the ground
Bomb-shell and grape and round-shot tore, still on they marched and fired—
Fast from each volley grenadier and voltigeur retired.
" Push on, my household cavalry ! " King Louis madly cried ;
To death they rush, but rude their shock—not unavenged they died.
On through the camp the column trod—King Louis turns his rein.
" Not yet, my liege," Saxe interposed, " the Irish troops remain " ;
And Fontenoy, famed Fontenoy, had been a Waterloo
Were not these exiles ready then, fresh, vehement and true.

" Lord Clare," he says, " you have your wish, there are your Saxon foes ! "
The Marshal almost smiles to see, so furiously he goes !
How fierce the look these exiles wear, who're wont to be so gay,
The treasured wrongs of fifty years are in their hearts to-day—
The treaty broken, e'er the ink wherewith 'twas writ could dry,
Their plundered homes, their ruined shrines, their women's parting cry,
Their priesthood, hunted down like wolves, their country overthrown—

Each looks as if revenge for all were staked on him alone.
On Fontenoy ! on Fontenoy ! nor ever yet elsewhere,
Rushed on to fight a nobler band than these proud exiles were.

O'Brien's voice is hoarse with joy, as, halting, he commands,
" Fix bay'nets "—" Charge ! "—Like mountain storm, rush on these fiery bands !
Thin is the English column now, and faint their volleys grow,
Yet, must'ring all the strength they have, they make a gallant show.
They dress their ranks upon the hill to face that battle wind—
Their bayonets the breaker's foam, like rocks the men behind.
One volley crashes from their line, when, through the surging smoke,
With empty guns clutched in their hands the headlong Irish broke.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, hark to that fierce Huzza !
" Revenge ! remember Limerick ! dash down the Sassanagh ! "

Like lions leaping at a fold, when mad with hunger's pang,
Right up against the English line, the Irish exiles sprang :
Bright was their steel, 'tis bloody now, their guns are filled with gore ;
Through shattered ranks, and severed files, and trampled flags they tore ;
The English strove with desperate strength, paused, rallied, staggered, fled—
The green hillside is matted close with dying and with dead ;
Across the plain and far away passed on that hideous wrack,
While cavalier and fantassin dash in upon their track.
On Fontenoy ! on Fontenoy ! like eagles in the sun,
With bloody plumes the Irish stand—the field is fought and won !

# THE FIFTH PERIOD

## FROM THE JACOBITE REBELLION, 1745, TO MODERN TIMES

# THE FIFTH PERIOD

*From the Jacobite Rebellion, 1745, to Modern Times*

## 1782

## THE ARMS OF EIGHTY-TWO[1]

By M. J. Barry

"Then England fell into difficulties (the American War). There was danger that Ireland would be invaded by foreign enemies. The Irish gentry sprang to arms. . . . These were the celebrated Irish Volunteers. No enemy, indeed, attacked the island, but the gentry, feeling their strength, and feeling also the generous glow of patriotism, resolved to convert their Parliament into a reality. Henry Grattan's wonderful eloquence fanned the flame, and the result was the declaration of Irish National Independence in 1782."—*Story of Ireland*, by Standish O'Grady.

THEY rose to guard their fatherland—
In stern resolve they rose,
In bearing firm, in purpose grand,
To meet the world as foes.
They rose, as brave men ever do;
And flashing bright
They bore to light
The arms of "Eighty-two!"

O! 'twas a proud and solemn sight
To mark that broad array
Come forth to claim a nation's right
'Gainst all who dared gainsay;
And despots shrunk, appalled to view
The men who bore
From shore to shore
The arms of "Eighty-two!"

[1] *Irish Minstrelsy* (Walter Scott), page 70.

They won her right—they passed away—
Within the tomb they rest—
And coldly lies the mournful clay
Above each manly breast;
But Ireland still may proudly view
What that great host
Had cherished most,
The arms of "Eighty-two!"

Time-honoured comrades of the brave—
Fond relics of their fame,
Does Ireland hold one coward slave
Would yield you up to shame?
One dastard who would tamely view
The alien's hand
Insulting brand
The arms of "Eighty-two?"

## GRATTAN

### By Aubrey de Vere

From 1690 to 1760 the Irish Catholics suffered one of the severest legal persecutions known to history. Disarmed, hunted, completely cowed by the Penal laws, they made no attempt during all that time to better their condition. . . . In 1761 and the years following there were several attempts at Agrarian risings, which, however, brought no relief. There is no glimpse of light till we reach the figure of Henry Grattan. Though a Protestant and a member of the Irish Parliament, he was one of Ireland's, and of Catholic Ireland's, greatest champions.

GOD works through man, not hills or snows!
In man, not men, is the god-like power;
The man, God's potentate, God foreknows;
He sends him strength at the destined hour;
His Spirit He breathes into one deep heart!
His cloud He bids from one mind depart:
A Saint!—and a race is to God re-born!
A Man! one man makes a nation's morn!

A man, and the blind land by slow degrees
  Gains sight! A man, and the deaf land hears!
A man, and the dumb land like waking seas
  Thunders low dirges in proud dull ears!
A man, and the People, a three days' corse,
Stands up and the grave-bands fall off perforce;
One man and the nation in height a span
To the measure ascends of the perfect man.

Thus wept unto God the land of Eire:
  Yet there rose no man and her hope was dead:
In the ashes she sat of a burned-out fire;
  And sackcloth was over her queenly head.
But a man in her latter days arose,
A Deliverer stepp'd from the camp of her foes.
He spake; the great and the proud gave way,
And the dawn began which shall end in day.

## 1782

## THE DUNGANNON CONVENTION

### By Thomas Davis

This Convention summoned by Lord Charlemont to meet in the old Presbyterian Church at Dungannan, in County Tyrone, passed resolutions amounting in effect to a Declaration of National Independence. "Two hundred and forty-two delegates, the representatives of one hundred and forty-three volunteer corps, mostly from the province of Ulster, met in full uniform."

I

THE Church of Dungannon is full to the door,
  And sabre and spur clash at times on the floor,
While helmet and shako are ranged all along,
Yet no book of devotion is seen in the throng.
In the front of the altar no minister stands,
But the crimson-clad chief of the warrior bands;

And though solemn the looks and the voices around,
You'd listen in vain for a litany's sound.
Say! what do they hear in the temple of prayer?
Oh! why in the fold has the lion his lair?

II

Sad, wounded and wan was the face of our isle
By English oppression and falsehood and guile,
Yet when to invade it a foreign fleet steered
To guard it for England the North volunteered.
From the citizen-soldiers the foe fled aghast—
Still they stood to their guns when the danger had past,
For the voice of America came o'er the wave
Crying—Woe to the tyrant, and hope to the slave!
Indignation and shame through their regiments speed,
They have arms in their hands, and what more do they need?

III

O'er the green hills of Ulster their banners are spread.
The cities of Leinster resound to their tread,
The valleys of Munster with ardour are stirred,
And the plains of wild Connaught their bugles have heard.
A Protestant front rank and Catholic rere—
For—forbidden the arms of freemen to bear—
Yet foemen and friend are full sure, if need be,
The slave for his country will stand by the free.
By green flag supported, the Orange flags wave,
And the soldier half turns to unfetter the slave!

IV

More honoured that Church of Dungannon is now
Than when at its altar Communicants bow;
More welcome to Heaven than anthem or prayer
Are the rights and the thoughts of the warriors there:

In the name of all Ireland the delegates swore:
"We've suffered too long and we'll suffer no more—
Unconquered by force, we were vanquished by fraud,
And now, in God's temple, we vow unto God,
That never again shall the Englishman bind
His chains on our limbs, or his laws on our mind."

V

The Church of Dungannon is empty once more—
No plumes on the altar, no clash on the floor,
But the counsels of England are fluttered to see,
In the cause of their country, the Irish agree;
So they give as a boon what they dare not withhold,
And Ireland, a nation, leaps up as of old.
With a name, and a trade, and a flag of her own,
And an army to fight for the people and throne.
But woe worth the day if, to falsehood or fears,
She surrender the guns of her brave volunteers.

## 1782

### SONG OF THE VOLUNTEERS OF 1782

By Thomas Davis

HURRAH! 'tis done—our freedom's won.
Hurrah! for the Volunteers!
No laws we own, but those alone
Of our Commons, King, and Peers.
The chain is broke—the Saxon yoke
From off our neck is taken;
Ireland awoke—Dungannon spoke—
With fear was England shaken.

When Grattan rose, none dared oppose
The claim he made for Freedom:
They knew our swords, to back his words
Were ready, did he need them.
Then let us raise to Grattan's praise
A proud and joyous anthem;
And wealth and grace and length of days,
May God in mercy grant him.

Bless Harry Flood, who nobly stood
By us through gloomy years!
Bless Charlemont the brave and good,
The Chief of the Volunteers!
The North began: the North held on
The strife for native land;
Till Ireland rose, and cowed her foes—
God bless the Northern land!

And bless the men of patriot pen—
Swift Molyneux and Lucas.
Bless sword and gun which "Free Trade" won—
Bless God! Who ne'er forsook us.
And long may last the friendship fast
Which binds us all together;
While we agree our foes shall flee
Like clouds in stormy weather.

Remember still, through good and ill
How vain were prayers and tears—
How vain were words till flashed the swords
Of the Irish Volunteers.
By Arms we've got the rights we sought
Through long and wretched years—
Hurrah! 'tis done, our Freedom's won—
Hurrah! for the Volunteers.

## 1796

## THE SHAN VAN VOCHT[1]

ANON

Wolfe Tone, the originator and leader of the United Irishmen, went over to France in 1796 and succeeded in persuading General Hoche to accompany him back to Ireland. Hoche sailed with 43 vessels and 15,000 troops, but contrary winds prevailed; they could not effect a landing, abandoned the expedition, and returned to France.

The advent of Lord Fitzwilliam as Lord Lieutenant in January, 1795, caused great joy in Ireland, and all minds were filled with hope and expectation of complete emancipation for the Catholics. Grattan brought in a Bill for the admission of Catholics to Parliament. But Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled in February and the "bill hopelessly lost, and all the elements of rebellion and disaffection at once began to seethe and ferment again. The rising of four years later dated from this decision, and was almost as directly due to it as if the latter had been planned with that object."—*Ireland*, by Emily Lawless. The avowed object of the United Irishmen after this was to make Ireland a republic.

O! THE French are on the sea,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
The French are on the sea,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
O! the French are in the bay,
They'll be here without delay,
And the Orange will decay,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*.

*Chorus.*

O, the French are in the Bay,
They'll be here by break of day,
And the Orange will decay,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*.

And their camp it shall be where?
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
Their camp it shall be where?
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*,

[1] *Irish Minstrelsy* (Walter Scott), page 13.

On the Curragh of Kildare
The boys they will be there
With their pikes in good repair,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht.*
To the Curragh of Kildare
The boys they will repair,
And Lord Edward will be there,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht.*

Then what will the yeomen [1] do ?
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
What *will* the yeomen do,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
What *should* the yeomen do
But throw off the red and blue,
And swear that they'll be true
To the *Shan Van Vocht.*
What *should* the yeomen do
But throw off the red and blue,
And swear that they'll be true
To the *Shan Van Vocht* ?

And what colour will they wear ?
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
What colour will they wear ?
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
What colour should be seen
Where our fathers' homes have been
But our own immortal green,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht.*
What colour should be seen
Where our fathers' homes have been
But our own immortal green,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht.*

[1] The Yeomen were Irish troops, mostly Orangemen, and raised to cope with the United Irishmen. They were often guilty of revolting atrocities, often on unoffending Catholics.

And will Ireland then be free?
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
Will Ireland then be free?
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*;
Yes, Ireland shall be free
From the centre to the sea,
Then hurra for Liberty!
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*.

Yes! Ireland shall be free
From the centre to the sea,
Then hurra! for Liberty,
Says the *Shan Van Vocht*.

## THE WAKE OF WILLIAM ORR

By William Drennan (1754–1820)

William Orr was a Presbyterian farmer of the County Down, a man of stainless character and much influence. He became a United Irishman, and in 1797 was accused and convicted of having sworn into the Society two soldiers. He was sentenced to death and executed, though two of the convicting jury swore that they were intoxicated when they gave their verdict. The execution after such a trial gave a great shock to public opinion, and Orr was regarded as a martyr.

THERE our murdered brother lies;
Wake him not with woman's cries;
Mourn the way that manhood ought—
Sit in silent trance of thought.

Write his merits on your mind;
Morals pure and manners kind;
In his head, as on a hill,
Virtue placed her citadel.

Why cut off in palmy youth?
Truth he spoke and acted truth
"Countrymen, UNITE," he cried,
And died for what our Saviour died.

God of peace and God of love!
Let it not Thy vengeance move—
Let it not Thy lightnings draw—
A nation guillotined by law.

Hapless nation, rent and torn,
Thou wert early taught to mourn;
Warfare of six hundred years!
Epochs marked with blood and tears!

* * * * *

Hapless Nation! hapless Land!
Heap of uncementing sand!
Crumbled by a foreign weight;
And by worse, domestic hate.

God of mercy! God of peace!
Make this mad confusion cease;
O'er the mental chaos move,
Through it SPEAK the light of love.

* * * * *

Here we watch our brother's sleep:
Watch with us, but do not weep.
Watch with us through dead of night—
But expect the morning light.

Conquer fortune—persevere!—
Lo! it breaks, the morning clear!
The cheerful cock awakes the skies,
The day is come—arise!—arise!

## 1798

# NINETY-EIGHT

### A CENTENARY ODE

BY WILLIAM ROONEY

The betrayal and seizure of the leaders of the Rebellion just before the rising had been planned to take place was the cause, not alone of its utter failure, but of the character it assumed in many places. In the north the United Irishmen were more or less organized, and their struggle, though brief, was creditable. But in Wexford and elsewhere in the south, discipline and order could scarcely have been expected of a leaderless peasantry, awakening to an angry realization of the wrongs of centuries. One is horrified at the atrocities committed, but one cannot feel surprised.

STILL forms, grey dust, black stones in Dublin city,
A grave in green Kildare,[1]
And many a grassy mound that moves our pity
O'er Erin everywhere;

Cave Hill,[2] above the Lagan's noises rearing
Her shaggy head in pride;
Lone Ednavady's brow and Antrim staring
Across Lough Neagh's rough tide;

Killala still her weary watch maintaining
Beside the ocean's boom,
And Castlebar in faithful guard remaining
Around the Frenchmen's tomb.

Ross, Wexford, Gorey, Oulart, Tubberneering,
And many a Wicklow glen
That knew the dauntless souls and hearts unfearing
Of Dwyer and all his men—

[1] Wolfe Tone's at Bodenstoun.
[2] Cave Hill, Belfast. Seen in certain aspects, the outline of this hill is that of a huge face.

These, through a hundred years of gloom and doubting
Speak trumpet-toned to-day,
Above the cry of creed and faction's shouting
To tread the olden way.

These, in the hearts of all the true men, waken
The olden fires anew;
These tell of hope unquenched and faith unshaken,
Of something still to do.

They bring us visions, full of tears and sorrow,
Of homes and hearts left lone;
Of eyes grown dim with watching for a morrow
Of joy that never shone.

But, too, they whisper notes of preparation
And strength beyond the seas,
Of Hope outliving right and desolation
Through all the centuries.

Then to the staff-head let our flag ascending,
Our fires on every hill
Tell to the nations of the earth attending
We wage the battle still—

Tell to the nations, though the grass is o'er them,
For many a weary year,
Our fathers' souls still thrill the land that bore them,
Their spirit still is there.

And by their graves we swear this year of story[1]
To battle side by side,
Till Freedom crowns with immemorial glory
The Cause for which they died.

[1] 1898.

1798

## THE WEARING OF THE GREEN[1]

STREET BALLAD

O, PADDY, dear, and did you hear the news that's going round?
The shamrock is forbid by law to grow on Irish ground;
St. Patrick's day no more we'll keep, his colours can't be seen,
For there's a bloody law again the wearing of the green.
I met with Napper Tandy,[2] and he took me by the hand,
And he said, "How's poor old Ireland and how does she stand?"
She's the most distressful country that ever yet was seen—
They are hanging men and women for the wearing of the green.

Then since the colour we must wear is England's cruel red,
Sure Ireland's sons will ne'er forget the blood that they have shed.
You may take the shamrock from your hat and cast it on the sod,
But 'twill take root and flourish there though under foot 'tis trod.
When laws can stop the blades of grass from growing as they grow,
And when the leaves in summer-time their verdure dare not show,
Then I will change the colour that I wear in my caubeen,
But, till that day, please God, I'll stick to wearing of the green.

[1] *Irish Minstrelsy* (Walter Scott), page 8.

[2] Napper Tandy was a Dublin merchant who joined the United Irishmen, and being proscribed as such escaped to America in 1795. Thence, in 1798, he made his way to France, and with a general's rank headed an abortive French attack on Ireland the same year. In 1801, after three years' imprisonment, he was tried and sentenced to death, but was reprieved on condition that he left the country. This he did, and died at Bordeaux in 1803.

1798

## THE CROPPY BOY

By Carroll Malone

"GOOD men and true! in this house who dwell
To a stranger *bouchal* I pray you tell
Is the priest at home? or may he be seen?
I would speak a word with Father Green."

"The Priest's at home, boy, and may be seen;
'Tis easy speaking with Father Green;
But you must wait till I go and see
If the holy father alone may be."

The youth has entered an empty hall—
What a lonely sound has his light footfall!
And the gloomy chamber's chill and bare,
With a vested Priest in a lonely chair.

The youth has knelt to tell his sins:
"*Nomine Dei*," the youth begins;
At *mea culpa* he beats his breast,
And in broken murmurs he speaks the rest.

"At the siege of Ross did my father fall,
And at Gorey my loving brothers all;
I alone am left of my name and race,
I will go to Wexford and take their place.

"I cursed three times since last Easter day—
At mass-time once I went to play;
I passed the churchyard one day in haste
And forgot to pray for my mother's rest.

"I bear no hate against living thing;
But I love my country above my King.
Now, Father! bless me and let me go
To die, if God has ordained it so."

The Priest said naught, but a rustling noise
Made the youth look up in wild surprise.
The robes were off, and in scarlet there
Sat a yeoman captain with fiery glare.

With fiery glare and with fury hoarse
Instead of blessing he breathed a curse:—
"'Twas a good thought, boy, to come here and shrive,
For one short hour is your time to live.

"Upon yon river three tenders float,
The Priest's in one if he isn't shot—
We ho'd his house for our Lord the King,
And, amen, say I, may all traitors swing!"

At Geneva barrack that young man died,
And at Passage they have his body laid.
Good people who live in peace and joy,
Breathe a prayer and a tear for the Croppy Boy.

## 1798

## MÁIRÍN-NI-CULLINÁN

### IRELAND'S LAMENT FOR LORD EDWARD

By Ethna Carbery

Lord Edward Fitzgerald, brother of the Duke of Leinster, was the head of the Rebellion of 1798. He had planned a general rising for May 24 in that year, but before that time he was betrayed, surprised, and taken prisoner after a struggle, during which he was wounded. He died shortly afterwards from the effects of his wound.

High-minded, patriotic, chivalrously brave, no name in Irish history inspires more passionate love and reverence than his.

UNDERNEATH the shrouding stone,
Where you lie in death alone,
Can you hear me calling, calling,
In a wild hot gush of woe?
'Tis for you my tears are falling—
For you *mo Craoibhin Cuo!*

When you stood up in the Green
As beseemed the Geraldine,
Slender sword a-glancing, glancing,
Over you the tender skies,
How the warrior-joy kept dancing
In your brave bright eyes.

"'*Stor*," I said, "*a stor mo chroidhe*,
Hope of Mine and Hope of Me,
Take our honour to your keeping,
Bare your swift blade to the Dawn.
Freedom's voice hath roused from sleeping
Máirín-ni-Cullinán."

So I dreamt the Day had come,
Now your ardent lips are dumb,

And the sword is rusty, rusty
Through a hundred weary years
A l the winds are blowing gusty
With a storm of tears.

"'*Stor*," I cry, above your bed,
Where I kneel uncomforted—
"Feel you not the battle-anger
Shake the Nations of the World?
While amid the stress and clangour
Still my Flag is furled.

"Were you here, O, Geraldine,
This oblivion had not been."
Thus I mourn you, pining, pining,
For the gallant heart long gone,
Whose love was as a true star shining
To Máirín-ni-Cullinán.

## THE GERALDINES

By Thomas Davis

THE Geraldines! the Geraldines!—'tis full a thousand years
Since, 'mid the Tuscan[1] vineyards, bright flashed their battle-spears;
When Capet seized the crown of France, their iron shields were known
And their sabre-dint struck terror on the banks of the Garonne;

[1] The Geraldine family originally came from Florence.

Across the downs of Hastings they spurred hard by William's side,
And the grey sands of Palestine with Moslem blood they dyed;
But never then, nor thence till now have falsehood or disgrace
Been seen to soil Fitzgerald's plume, or mantle in his face.

The Geraldines! the Geraldines!—'tis true, in Strongbow's van,
By lawless force, as conquerors, their Irish reign began;
But oh! through many a dark campaign they proved their prowess stern,
In Leinster's plains, and Munster's vales, on king and chief and kerne;

But noble was the cheer within the halls so rudely won,
And gen'rous was the steel-gloved hand that had such slaughter done!
How gay their laugh! how proud their mien! you'd ask no herald's sign—
Among a thousand you had known the princely Geraldine.

These Geraldines! these Geraldines!—not long our air they breathed,
Not long they fed on venison, in Irish water seethed,
Not often had their children been by Irish mothers nursed,
When from their full and genial hearts an Irish feeling burst!

The English monarchs strove in vain, by law, and force, and bribe,
To win from Irish thoughts and ways this "more than Irish" tribe;
For still they clung to fosterage, to *brehon* cloak, and bard:
What King dare say to Geraldine: "Your Irish wife discard"?

Ye, Geraldines! ye Geraldines! how royally ye reigned
O'er Desmond broad and rich Kildare, and English arts disdained:
Your sword made knights, your banner waved, free was your bugle call
By Glyn's green slopes, and Dingle's tide from Barrow's banks to Youghal.

What gorgeous shrines, what Brehon lore, what minstrel feasts there were
In and around Maynooth's grey keep, and palace filled Adare,
But not for rite or feast ye stayed when friend or kin were pressed,
And foemen fled when "Crom abu" bespoke your lance in rest.

Ye Geraldines! ye Geraldines, since Silken Thomas flung
King Henry's sword on council board, the English thanes among,
Ye never ceased to battle brave against the English sway,
Though axe and brand and treachery, your proudest cut away.

Of Desmond's blood through woman's veins passed on th' exhausted tide;
His title lives—a Sassenach churl usurps the lion's hide:
And though Kildare tower haughtily, there's ruin at the root,
Else why, since Edward[1] fell to earth, had such a tree no fruit?

True Geraldines! brave Geraldines! as torrents mould the earth,
You channelled deep old Ireland's heart by constancy and worth:
When Ginckle leaguered Limerick, the Irish soldiers gazed
To see if in the setting sun dead Desmond's banner blazed!

[1] Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

And still it is the peasant's hope upon the Curragh's mere,
"They live who'll see ten thousand men with good Lord Edward here."
So let them dream till brighter days when, not by Edward's shade
But by some leader true as he, their lines shall be arrayed.

These Geraldines! these Geraldines! rain wears away the rock,
And time may wear away the tribe that stood the battle's shock;
But ever, sure, while one is left of all that honoured race,
In front of Ireland's chivalry is that Fitzgerald's place;

And though the last were dead and gone, how many a field and town,
From Thomas-court to Abbeyfeile, would cherish their renown!
And men will say of valour's rise, or ancient power's decline,
"'Twill never soar, it never shone, as did the Geraldine."

The Geraldines! the Geraldines! and are there any fears
Within the sons of conquerors for full a thousand years?
Can treason spring from out a soil bedewed with martyr's blood?
Or has that grown a purling brook which long rushed down a flood?

By Desmond swept with sword and fire, by clan and keep laid low,
By Silken Thomas and his kin, by sainted Edward! No!
The forms of centuries rise up and in the Irish line
COMMAND THEIR SON TO TAKE THE POST THAT FITS THE GERALDINE!

1798

## THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD

By John Kells Ingram

WHO fears to speak of Ninety-Eight ?
Who blushes at the name ?
When cowards mock the patriots' fate
Who hangs his head for shame ?
He's all a knave, or half a slave,
Who slights his country thus ;
But a *true* man, like you, man,
Will fill your glass with us.

We drink the memory of the brave,
The faithful and the few—
Some lie far off beyond the wave—
Some sleep in Ireland too ;
All—all are gone—but still lives on
The fame of those who died—
All true men like you, men,
Remember them with pride.

Some on the shores of distant lands
Their weary hearts have laid,
And by the stranger's heedless hands
Their lonely graves were made ;
But, though their clay be far away
Beyond the Atlantic foam—
In true men, like you, men,
Their spirit's still at home.

The dust of some is Irish earth
Among their own they rest,
And the same land that gave them birth
Has caught them to her breast;
And we will pray that from their clay
Full many a race may start
Of true men, like you, men
To act as brave a part.

They rose in dark and evil days
To right their native land;
They kindled here a living blaze
That nothing shall withstand.
Alas that Might can vanquish Right—
*They* felt and pass'd away;
But true men, like you, men,
Are plenty here to-day.

Then here's their memory—may it be
For us a guiding light,
To cheer our strife for liberty,
And teach us to unite;
Through good and ill be Ireland's still,
Though sad as theirs your fate;
And true men, be you, men,
Like those of Ninety-Eight.

## 1798

## ARBOR HILL

### By Robert Emmet

"Arbor Hill, in the city of Dublin, is the site of a military prison. Into the burying-ground which is attached were cast the bodies of many of the insurgents shot in '98. The following lines were written by the patriot-martyr, Robert Emmet. It is believed to be the only poem of Emmet's extant."
—Note in *Poetry and Songs of Ireland*, edited by John Boyle O'Reilly.

NO rising column marks this spot,
Where many a victim lies;
But oh! the blood that here has streamed,
To Heaven for justice cries.

It claims it on the oppressor's head
Who joys in human woe,
Who drinks the tears by misery shed,
And marks them as they flow.

It claims it on the callous judge,[1]
Whose hands in blood are dyed,
Who arms injustice with the sword,
The balance throws aside.

It claims it for his ruined isle,
Her wretched children's grave;
Where withered freedom droops her head,
And man exists—a slave.

[1] Lord Norbury.

Oh! sacred Justice! free this land
From tyranny abhorred;
Resume thy balance and thy seal—
Resume—but sheathe thy sword.

No retribution should we seek—
Too long has horror reigned
By mercy marked; may freedom rise
By cruelty unstained.

Nor shall a tyrant's ashes mix
With those, our martyred dead;
This is the place where Erin's sons
In Erin's cause have bled.

And those who here are laid at rest,
Oh! hallowed be each name;
Their memories are for ever blest—
Consigned to endless fame.

Unconsecrated is this ground,
Unblest by holy hands;
No bell here tolls its solemn sound,
No monument here stands.

But here the patriot's tears are shed,
The poor man's blessing given;
These consecrate the virtuous dead,
These waft their fame to Heaven.

## 1800–1

## THE UNION[1]

### By Sliabh Cuilinn

In 1800 the Act of Union was passed by the Irish Parliament. We may applaud or condemn the measure as its necessity or otherwise may strike us; but there is no honourable man who will not condemn and abhor the *means* employed to secure the consent of the Irish Parliament, no Irishman who will not feel ashamed of those, his fellow-countrymen, who sold Ireland for gold in 1800.

HOW did they pass the Union?
By perjury and fraud;
By slaves who sold their land for gold
As Judas sold his God;
By all the savage acts that yet
Have followed England's track—
The pitchcap and the bayonet,
The gibbet and the rack.
And thus was passed the Union
By Pitt and Castlereagh;
Could Satan send for such an end
More worthy tools than they?

How thrive we by the Union?
Look round our native land:
In ruined trade and wealth decayed
See slavery's surest brand;
Our glory as a nation gone;
Our substance drained away;
A wretched province trampled on
Is all we've left to-day.
Then curse with me the Union,
That juggle foul and base,
The baneful root that bore such fruit
Of ruin and disgrace.

[1] *Irish Minstrelsy* (Walter Scott), page 84.

And shall it last, this Union,
To grind and waste us so ?
O'er hill and lea from sea to sea
All Ireland thunders, No !
Eight million necks are stiff to bow,
We know our might as men ;
We conquer'd once before and now
We'll conquer once again,
And rend the cursed Union
And fling it to the wind—
And Ireland's laws in Ireland's cause
Alone our hearts shall bind !

## 1801

## ENGLAND'S ULTIMATUM

By Sliabh Cuilinn

SLAVES ! lie down and kiss your chains,
To the Union yield in quiet ;
Were it hemlock in your veins,
Stand it must—*we* profit by it.

English foot on Irish neck,
English gyve on Irish sinew,
Ireland swayed at England's beck—
So it is, and shall continue.

English foot on Irish neck,
Pine or rot, meanwhile, we care not ;
Little will we pause to reck
How you writhe, while rise you dare not.



ETHNA CARBERY

Argue with you !—stoop to show
Our dominion's just foundation !
Savage Celts ! and dare you so
Task the lords of half creation ?

Argue ! do not ask again,
Proofs enough there are to sway you ;
Three and twenty thousand men
Whom a word will loose to slay you.

Store of arguments besides
In their time we will exhibit—
Leaded thongs for rebel hides,
Flaming thatch and burthened gibbet.

Bid your fathers tell how we
Proved our rights in bygone seasons ;
Slaves and sons of slaves ! your knee
Bow to *sister* England's reasons.

## 1803

## EMMET'S DEATH

### By S. F. C.

Robert Emmet was executed on September 20, 1803. His rising had been a complete failure. He was but a youth, high of soul, noble and fired with a romantic patriotism, wanting, however, in that sound practical sense which is necessary in a leader of men. The beautiful story of his love for Miss Curran —a love which cost him his life—is well known.

"HE dies to-day," said the heartless judge,
Whilst he sat him down to the feast,
And a smile was upon his ashy lips
As he uttered a ribald jest ;

For a demon dwelt where his heart should be
That lived upon blood and sin,
And oft as that vile judge gave him food
The demon throbbed within.

"He dies to-day," said the gaoler grim,
Whilst a tear was in his eye;
"But why should I feel so grieved for *him*?
Sure I've seen many die!
Last night I went to his stony cell
With the scanty prison fare—
He was sitting at a table rude,
Plaiting a lock of hair!

"And he looked so mild, with his pale, pale face,
And he spoke in so kind a way
That my old breast heav'd with a smothering feel,
And I knew not what to say."

"He dies to-day," thought a fair, sweet girl—
She lacked the life to speak,
For sorrow had almost frozen her blood,
And white were her lip and cheek—
Despair had drank up her last wild tear
And her brow was damp and chill,
And they often felt at her heart with fear
For its ebb was all but still.

## RODY McCORLEY

By Ethna Carbery

HO! see the fleet-foot hosts of men
Who speed with faces wan,
From farmstead and from fisher's cot
Upon the banks of Bann!
They come with vengeance in their eyes—
Too late, too late are they—
For Rody McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Oh! Ireland, mother Ireland,
You love them still the best,
The fearless brave who fighting fall
Upon your hapless breast;
But never a one of all your dead
More bravely fell in fray
Than he who marches to his fate
On the Bridge of Toome to-day

Up the narrow street he stepped,
Smiling and proud and young;
About the hemp-rope on his neck
The golden ringlets clung.
There's never a tear in the blue, blue eyes,
Both glad and bright are they
As Rody McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Ah! when he last stepped up that street,
His shining pike in hand,
Behind him marched in grim array
A stalwart earnest band!
For Antrim town! for Antrim town
He led them to the fray—
And Rody McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

The grey coat and its sash of green
Were brave and stainless then,
A banner flashed beneath the sun
Over the marching men—
The coat hath many a rent this noon,
The sash is torn away,
And Rody McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Oh! how his pike flashed to the sun!
Then found a foeman's heart!
Through furious fight and heavy odds
He bore a true man's part;
And many a red-coat bit the dust
Before his keen pike-play—
But Rody McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Because he loved the Motherland,
Because he loved the Green,
He goes to meet the martyr's fate
With proud and joyous mien.
True to the last, true to the last
He treads the upward way—
Young Rody McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

## 1803

## MICHAEL DWYER

By T. D. Sullivan

Michael Dwyer was a famous outlaw who held out in the Wicklow mountains and caused the British a great deal of trouble. His surrender in 1803 was the last event of the great '98 rebellion.

"AT length, brave Michael Dwyer, you and your trusty men
Are hunted o'er the mountains and tracked into the glen.
Sleep not, but watch and listen; keep ready blade and ball;
The soldiers know you're hiding to-night in wild Imaal."

The soldiers searched the valley, and towards the dawn of day
Discovered where the outlaws, the dauntless rebels, lay.
Around the little cottage they formed into a ring
And called out, "Michael Dwyer! surrender to the King!"

Thus answered Michael Dwyer: "Into this house we came
Unasked by those who own it—they cannot be to blame.
Then let these peaceful people unquestioned pass you through,
And when they're placed in safety, I'll tell you what we'll do."

'Twas done. "And now," said Dwyer, "your work you may begin:
You are a hundred outside—we're only four within.
We've heard your haughty summons, and this is our reply—
We're true United Irishmen, we'll fight until we die."

Then burst the war's red lightning, then poured the leaden rain,
The hills around re-echoed the thunder peals again.
The soldiers falling round him brave Dwyer sees with pride;
But ah! one gallant comrade is wounded by his side.

Yet there are three remaining good battle still to do;
Their hands are strong and steady, their aim is quick and true—
But hark that furious shouting the savage soldiers raise!
The house is fired around them! the roof is in a blaze!

And brighter every moment the lurid flame arose,
And louder swelled the laughter and cheering of their foes.
Then spake the brave McAlister, the weak and wounded man:
"You can escape, my comrades, and this shall be your plan:

"Place in my hands a musket, then lie upon the floor;
I'll stand before the soldiers and open wide the door:
They'll pour into my bosom the fire of their array;
Then, whilst their guns are empty, dash through them and away."

He stood before his foemen, revealed amidst the flame.
From out their levelled pieces the wished-for volley came;
Up sprang the three survivors for whom the hero died,
But only Michael Dwyer broke through the ranks outside.

He baffled his pursuers, who followed like the wind;
He swam the river Slaney, and left them far behind;
But many an English soldier he promised soon should fall
For these his gallant comrades, who died in wild Imaal.

## 1820

### LAMENT FOR GRATTAN

By Thomas Moore

"Grattan, whose unflagging courage, high endowments, and incorruptible honesty had so materially contributed to his country's emancipation. . . . He was the first of the Patriots who received his retainer from the people, and not from the Crown, and he was one of the few who never betrayed his client."
—Walpole.

SHALL the Harp then be silent, when he who first gave
To our country a name is withdrawn from all eyes ?
Shall a Minstrel of Erin stand mute by the grave
Where the first—where the last of her Patriots lies ?

No—faint tho' the death-song may fall from his lips,
Tho' his Harp like his soul may with shadows be crost,
Yet, yet shall it sound, 'mid a nation's eclipse
And proclaim to the world what a star hath been lost ;—

What a union of all the affections and powers
By which life is exalted, embellish'd, refined,
Was embraced in that spirit—whose centre was ours
While its mighty circumference circled mankind.

Oh ! who that loves Erin, or who that can see
Through the waste of her annals, that epoch sublime,
Like a pyramid raised in the desert—where he
And his glory stand out to the eyes of all time ;

That *one* lucid interval, snatch'd from the gloom
And the madness of ages, when fill'd with his soul
A nation o'erleap'd the dark bounds of her doom,
And for *one* sacred instant touch'd Liberty's goal.

Who that ever hath heard him—hath drunk at the source
Of that wonderful eloquence all Erin's own,
In whose high-thoughted daring the fire and the force
And the yet untamed spring of her spirit are shown?

An eloquence rich, wheresoever its wave
Wander'd free and triumphant with thoughts that shone thro'
As clear as the brook's "stone of lustre," and gave
With the flash of the gem, its solidity, too.

Who that ever approach'd him, when free from the crowd
In a home full of love he delighted to tread
'Mong the trees which a nation had giv'n and which bow'd.
As if each brought a new civic crown for his head—

Is there one, who hath thus, through his orbit of life
But at distance observed him—through glory, through blame,
In the calm of retreat, in the grandeur of strife,
Whether shining or clouded, still high and the same,—

Oh no, not a heart that e'er knew him but mourns
Deep, deep o'er the grave, where such glory is shrined—
O'er a monument Fame will preserve, 'mong the urns
Of the wisest, the bravest, the best of mankind!

## 1782–1800

## O'CONNELL

By Denis Florence McCarthy

"The hour had come, and with it the man. O'Connell sprang into existence as a great political force. . . . A great and just cause, a magnificent personality, oratory that swayed and moved great masses of men, as they have never been swayed and moved before or since, swept all opposition like chaff before the wind."—*Ireland and the Empire*, T. W. Russell, M.P.

A DAZZLING gleam of evanescent glory
Had passed away, and all was dark once more.
One golden page had lit the mournful story
Which ruthless hands with envious rage out-tore.

One glorious sun-burst, radiant and far reaching,
Had pierced the cloudy veil dark ages wove,
When full-armed Freedom rose from Grattan's teaching
As sprang Minerva from the brain of Jove.

Oh! in the transient light that had outbroken,
How all the land with quickening fire was lit!
What golden words of deathless speech were spoken,
What lightning flashes of immortal wit!

Letters and arts revived beneath its beaming,
Commerce and Hope outspread their swelling sails,
And with "Free Trade" upon their standard gleaming,
Now feared no foes and dared adventurous gales.

Across the stream the graceful arch extended,
Above the pile the rounded dome arose;
The soaring spire to heaven's high vault ascended,
The loom hummed loud as bees at evening's close.

And yet 'mid all this hope and animation
The people still lay bound in bigot chains.
Freedom that gave some slight alleviation
Could dare no panacea for their pains.

Yet faithful to their country's quick uprising,
Like some fair island from volcanic waves
They shared the triumph though their chains despising,
And hailed the freedom though themselves were slaves.

But soon had come the final compensation,
Soon would the land one brotherhood have known,
Had not some spell of hellish incantation
The new-formed fane of Freedom overthrown.

In one brief hour the fair mirage had faded,
No isle of flowers lay glad on ocean's green;
But in its stead, deserted and degraded,
The barren strand of slavery's shore was seen.

## 1829

INTO the senate swept the mighty chief
Like some great ocean-wave across the bar
Of intercepting rock, whose jagged reef
But frets the victor whom it cannot mar.
Into the senate his triumphal car
Rushed like a conqueror's through the broken gates
Of some fallen city, whose defenders are
Powerful no longer to resist the fates,
But yield at last to him whom wondering Fame awaits.

And as "sweet foreign Spenser" might have sung,
Yoked to the car two wingèd steeds were seen
With eyes of fire and flashing hoofs outflung,
As if Apollo's coursers they had been.
These were quick Thought and Eloquence, I ween,
Bounding together with impetuous speed,
While overhead there waved a flag of green
Which seemed to urge still more each flying steed,
Until they reached the goal the hero had decreed.

There at his feet a captive wretch lay bound,
Hideous, deformed, of baleful countenance,
Whom, as his bloodshot eyeballs glared around,
As if to kill with their malignant glance,
I knew to be the fiend Intolerance.
But now no longer had he power to slay,
For Freedom touched him with Ithuriel's lance,
His horrid form revealing by its ray,
And showed how foul a fiend the world could once obey.

Then followed after him a numerous train,
Each bearing trophies of the field he won:
Some the white wand and some the civic chain,
Its golden letters glistening in the sun;
Some—for the reign of justice had begun—
The ermine robes that soon would be the prize
Of spotless lives that all pollution shun,
And some in mitred pomp with upturned eyes
And grateful hearts invoked a blessing from the skies.

## 1843

## FATHER MATTHEW

### ODE TO A PAINTER ABOUT TO COMMENCE A PICTURE ILLUSTRATING THE LABOURS OF FATHER MATTHEW

By T. Condon

Every Irish boy and girl knows, or should know, all about the great and successful labours of Father Matthew in the cause of temperance in Ireland.

SEIZE thy pencil, child of art!
Fame and fortune brighten o'er thee.
Great thy hand and great thy heart
If well thou dost the work before thee!
'Tis not thine to round the shield
Or point the sabre black or gory;
'Tis not thine to spread the field,
Where crime is crowned—where guilt is glory!

Child of art! to thee be given
To paint, in colours all unclouded,
Breakings of a radiant heaven
O'er an isle in darkness shrouded!
But, to paint them true and well,
Every ray we see them shedding
In its very light must tell
What a gloom *before* was spreading.

Canst thou picture dried-up tears—
Eyes that wept no longer weeping—
Faithful woman's wrongs and fears,
Lonely nightly vigils keeping—
Listening every footfall nigh,
Hoping him she loves returning?
Canst thou then depict her joy
That we may know *the change* from mourning?

Paint in colours strong, but mild,
Our isle's redeemer and director.
Canst thou paint *the man* a *child*,
Yet shadow forth the mighty VICTOR?
Let his path a rainbow span,
Every *hue* and *colour* blending,
Beaming "peace and love" to man,
And alike o'er ALL extending!

Canst thou paint a land made free—
From its sleep of bondage woken—
Yet withal, that we may see
What 'twas *before* the chain was broken?
Seize thy pencil, child of art!
Fame and fortune brighten o'er thee!
Great thy hand and great thy heart
If well thou dost the work before thee!

1846–7

## A MYSTERY

By D. F. McCarthy

These poems tell their sad story well. The misery of a starving nation has touched the hearts of many poets, some to sorrow alone and some to indignation that vessels laden with corn should have been allowed to leave the shores of a country whose people were dying by thousands for want of food.

THEY are dying! they are dying! where the golden corn is growing;
They are dying! they are dying! where the crowded herds are lowing
They are gasping for existence where the streams of life are flowing,
And they perish of the plague where the breeze of health is blowing!

God of Justice! God of Power!
Do we dream? Can it be?
In this land, at this hour,
With the blossom on the tree,
In the gladsome month of May,
When the young lambs play,
When Nature looks around
On her waking children now,
The seed within the ground,
The bud upon the bough?
Is it right? is it fair?
That we perish of despair
In this land, on this soil,
Where our destiny is set,
Which we cultured with our toil
And watered with our sweat?

We have ploughed, we have sown,
But the crop was not our own.
We have reaped, but harpy hands
Swept the harvest from our lands;
We were perishing for food.
'Tis for this they are dying where the crowded herds are lowing,
"Tis for this they are dying where the streams of life are flowing,
And they perish of the plague where the breeze of health is blowing.

## THE FAMINE YEAR[1]

By Lady Wilde

WEARY men, what reap ye?—Golden corn for the stranger.
What sow ye?—Human corses that wait for the avenger.

[1] *Irish Minstrelsy* (Walter Scott), page 68.

Fainting forms, hunger stricken, what see ye in the offing ?
Stately ships to bear our food away, amid the stranger's scoffing.
There's a proud array of soldiers—what do they round your door ?
They guard our master's granaries from the thin hands of the poor.
Pale mothers, wherefore weeping ? Would to God that we were dead—
Our children swoon before us, and we cannot give them bread.

Little children, tears are strange upon your infant faces ;
God meant you but to smile within your mother's soft embraces.
O, we know not what is smiling, and we know not what is dying ;
But we're hungry, very hungry, and we cannot stop our crying.
And some of us grow cold and white—we know not what it means ;
But, as they lie beside us, we tremble in our dreams.
There's a gaunt crowd on the highway—are you come to pray to man
With hollow eyes that cannot weep, and for words your faces wan ?

No ; the blood is dead within our veins—we care not now for life ;
Let us lie hid in the ditches, far from children and from wife ;
We cannot stay and listen to their raving famished cries—
Bread ! Bread ! Bread ! and none to still their agonies.
We left our infants playing with their dead mother's hand :
We left our maidens maddened by the fever's scorching brand :

Better, maiden, thou wert strangled in thy own dark-twisted tresses—
Better, infant, thou wert smothered in thy mother's first caresses.

We are fainting in our misery, but God will hear our groan;
Yet, if fellow-men desert us, will He hearken from His throne?
Accursed are we in our own land, yet toil we still and toil;
But the stranger reaps our harvest—the alien owns our soil.
O Christ! how have we sinned, that on our native plains
We perish homeless, naked, starved, with branded brow like Cain's?
Dying, dying wearily, with a torture sure and slow—
Dying as a dog would die, by the wayside as we go.

One by one they're falling round us, their pale faces to the sky;
We've no strength left to dig them graves—there let them lie.
The wild bird, if he's stricken, is mourned by the others,
But we—we die in Christian land—we die amid our brothers,
In a land which God has given us, like a wild beast in his cave,
Without a tear, a prayer, a shroud, a coffin, or a grave.
Ha! but think ye, the contortions on each livid face ye see
Will not be read on judgment-day by eyes of Deity?

We are wretches, famished, scorned, human tools to build your pride,
But God will yet take vengeance for the souls for whom Christ died.
Now in your hour of pleasure—bask ye in the world's caress;
But our whitening bones against ye will rise as witnesses,
From the cabins and the ditches in their charred uncoffined masses.
For the Angel of the Trumpet will know them as he passes,
A ghastly spectral army, before the great God we'll stand
And arraign ye as our murderers, the spoilers of our land!

## 1848

## TO THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER

### By Eva

Born in Waterford in 1803 and educated at Clongowes, Meagher first came into notice as a brilliant orator among the young Irelanders. In 1848 for his share in the insurrection he was condemned to death. Being reprieved and expatriated to Tasmania, he escaped to America and subsequently acquired fame as a general on the Federal side in the American Civil War. He was drowned in the Missouri in 1867.

THE ancient towers of the land,
The mountains blue and hoary,
The murmuring rivers bright and bland
Seem lit with newer glory.
They look on thee, they smile on thee,
Young patriot, bend thee lowly—
A spirit deep of prophecy
Breathes o'er thee, true and holy!

Oh, fold thy hands and bend thy brow,
For solemn words are spoken—
The glorious way before thee now
Is yet through bonds unbroken.
Go! strong in warrior's heart of fire
And tongue of Coradh's[1] power,
Nor force of wiles, nor darkest ire
May triumph o'er that dower!

## 1867

## RORY OF THE HILLS

### By C. J. Kickham

This poem embodies the spirit of the Fenian rising of 1867.

"THAT rake up near the rafters,
Why leave it there so long?
The handle of the best of ash
Is smooth, and straight and strong;

[1] *Coradh.* The war musicians of Ancient Ireland were called Coradhs.

And, mother, will you tell me,
  Why did my father frown
When to make the hay in summer-time
  I climbed to take it down ?"
She looked into her husband's eyes,
  While her own with light did fill.
"You'll shortly know the reason, boy,"
  Said Rory of the Hill.

The midnight moon is lighting up
  The slopes of Sliav-na-man—
Whose foot affrights the startled hares
  So long before the dawn ?"
He stopped just where the Anner's stream
  Winds up the woods anear,
Then whistled low and looked around
  To see the coast was clear.
A sheeling door flew open—
  In he stepped with right good will—
"God save all here and bless your work,"
  Said Rory of the Hill.

Right hearty was the welcome
  That greeted him, I ween,
For years gone by he fully proved
  How well he loved the Green ;
And there was one among them
  Who grasped him by the hand—
One who, through all that weary time
  Roamed on a foreign strand ;
He brought them news from gallant friends
  That made their heart-strings thrill—
"My soul, I never doubted them !"
  Said Rory of the Hill.

They sat around the humble board
Till dawning of the day,
And yet no song nor shout I heard—
No revellers were they;
Some brows flushed red with gladness,
While some were grimly pale:
But pale or red, from out those eyes
Flashed souls that never quail!
"And sing us now about the vow
They swore for to fulfil."
"You'll read it yet in history,"
Said Rory of the Hill.

Next day the ashen handle
He took down from where it hung.
The toothed rake, full scornfully
Into the fire he flung;
And in its stead a shining blade
Is gleaming once again—
(Oh! for a hundred thousand of
Such weapons and such men!)
Right soldierly he wielded it,
And going through his drill,
"Attention, Charge, Front, Point, Advance,"
Cried Rory of the Hill.

She looked at him with woman's pride,
With pride and woman's fears:
She flew to him, she clung to him,
And dried away her tears.
He feels her pulse beat truly;
While her arms around him twine—
"Now, God be praised for your stout heart,
Brave little wife of mine."

He swung his first-born in the air,
While joy his heart did fill.
"You'll be a freeman yet, my boy,"
Said Rory of the Hill.

Oh! knowledge is a wondrous power,
And stronger than the wind;
And thrones shall fall and despots bow
Before the might of mind.
The poet, and the orator
The heart of man can sway,
And would to the kind Heavens
That Wolfe Tone were here to-day.
Yet, trust me, friends, dear Ireland's strength,
Her truest strength, is still
The rough and ready roving boys
Like Rory of the Hill.

## OUR 'PRISONED IRISH CHIEF

BY T. O'D. O'CALLAGHAN

"The greatest Irishman since the days of Hugh O'Neill." Thus was Parnell described by his colleague and contemporary, the present leader of the Irish party, and again his work "was the work of one masterly, cool, and far-seeing brain, of one dauntless and unpurchasable heart. Parnell taught Irishmen to unite, Parnell taught Irishmen self-respect and self-reliance." —J. E. Redmond, Speech in New York.

I

PARNELL! all hail! in Saxon jail
To-day immured—
Bold champion of our trampled race,
Who've long endured
Deep wrong, though strong each man among
The Clan-na-Gael,

Who long to front the battle-brunt
In Innisfail.
Thou'st nobly strove, with patriot love
For native-land;
In Freedom's cause, 'gainst alien laws
Your fight was grand;
Since gallant Tone, fell stricken, prone
Since Edward's spirit fled,
Since Emmet died by Liffey's side
Than thou none truer led
The Celtic race, with chieftain grace,
Brave heart and hero head.

II

When clouds hung dark o'er Ireland stark,
A corpse almost;
When cynics said the cause was dead,
And Ireland lost,
Your spirit flamed, your banner streamed
Like meteor bright,
And lit the land from shore to strand—
Bold beacon light.
Brave Chief! to-day within those gray
Old walls of stone
Thy grand soul shines like diamond mines
To light us on;
Nor gyves nor chains can shackle brains
Or brawn like thine;
Thy spirit soars o'er Ireland's shores
From brine to brine.

1891

## THE DEAD CHIEF

By Katherine Tynan

"The most wonderful, the most fascinating of Irish leaders."—T. W. Russell.

AS a great tree, the greatest in the forest,
Sheltering a myriad birds,
And, in the tempest when the need is sorest,
The trembling flocks and herds;

As a great tree that murmuring hears far under
Dissension, littleness—
And holds its proud head high, a whole world's wonder
Over the storm and stress;

Lo! but our tree is down! Who shall restore it:
There's ruin in its place,
And every meanest weed once crouched before it
Lifting a living face!

Shelterless, homeless, fatherless, forsaken,
Its outcast children go,
Their city of hope in wreck, their fear o'ertaken,
Their heaven shut out by snow.

As a great lion that all day lies dying
Massive against the sun,
And ever closer hears the jackalls crying
Because his might is done.

O, but our Chief, our Love, there's no returning,
No words can make you come,
Not all our wringing hands, our useless mourning,
Our anger fierce and dumb.

They drove you to your death through a long passion
Of agony and pain;
The cup you drank was brimmed by your own nation,
And who shall cleanse the stain?

Was deadliest pain, within you and without you,
And death upon your face,
While every vilest creature dared to flout you,
Striking your gentleness.

Seed of the Scribes and Pharisees reviled you,
With a self-righteous prayer;
The tongues of foulness that had fain defiled you
But showed how great you were.

The ingrates you had raised saw thus more clearly
The poisoned darts to place.
Their hate that never rested late or early
Gave you no minute's grace.

With malice and fine judgment all unerring,
They touched each vital part,
Till you were all one wound past mortal bearing,
Then broke the noblest heart.

The hate of hate was yours, our Chief, our darling—
The hatred of the base—
But O, the love of love! our heart-strings curling
Grew round you in your place.

Say now to Emmet and Wolfe Tone, moreover—
  Who hold their hands to you—
That never your Ireland had a better lover
  Than you, your Ireland slew.

Say yet that not their names are holier keeping
  Than yours! O dear and brave,
For whom to-day your Ireland's wild with weeping,
  Her wet face on your grave.

To-night and many a night in restless slumber
  She'll dream you are not dead,
And wake to weep her sick tears without number
  O'er your beloved head.

As a great tree, the greatest in the forest
  Cast down, our darling lies,
And will not hear us though our grief be sorest,
  Nor open his sad eyes.

Inconsequent and incoherent though it be, this poem seems to us a true expression of the dismay and grief with which Ireland received the news of Parnell's death.

## A SONG OF DEFEAT

By Stephen Gwynn

NOT for the lucky warriors,
  —The winner at Waterloo,
Or him of a newer name
Whom loud-voiced triumphs acclaim
Victor against the few—
Not for these, O Eire,
I build in my heart to-day
The lay of your sons and you.

I call to your mind to-day,
Out of the mists of the past,
Many a hull and many a mast
Black in the bight of the bay
Over against Ben Edair;
And the lip of the ebbing tideway all
Red with the life of Gael and Jall,
And the Danes in a headlong slaughter sent:
—And the women of Eire keening
For Brian, slain at his tent.

Mother, O grey, sad mother,
Love, with the troubled eyes,
For whom I marshal to-day
The sad and splendid array
Calling the lost to arise,
—As some queen's courtier unbidden
Might fetch her gems to the sun,
Praising the glory and glow
Of all that was hers to show—
Eire, love Brian well,
For Brian fought, and he fell;
But Brian fought, and he won;
God, that was long ago!
Nearer and dearer to you,
Eire, Eire, *mo bhron*
(List to the name of your own,
O *sweet* name, my Sorrow).
Are the Suns that flamed and faded
In a night that had no morrow—

I call to your mind Red Hugh,
And the castle's broken ward;

I call to your mind O'Neill,
And the fight at the Yellow Ford:
—And the ships afloat on the main,
Bearing O'Donnell to Spain
For the flame of his quick and leaping soul
To be quenched in a venomed bowl;
—And the shores by the Swilly's shadows,
And the Earls pushed out through the foam,
And O'Neill in his grave-clothes lying
With the wish of his heart in Ireland
And his body cold in Rome.
I call to your mind Benburb
And the stubborn Ulster steel
And the triumph of Owen Roe:
Clonmel and the glorious stand
Of the younger Hugh O'Neill;
—And Owen dead at Derry
And Cromwell loosed on the land.

I call to your mind brave Sarsfield,
And the battle in Limerick street,
The mine and the shattered wall,
And the battered breach held good,
And William full in retreat:
—And, at the end of all,
Wild geese rising on clamorous wing
To follow the flight of an alien king.
And the hard-won treaty broke
And the Elder faith oppressed,
And the blood—but not for Ireland—
Red upon Sarsfield's breast.
Ended, the roll of the great
And the famous leaders of armies,
The shining lamps of the Gael,

Who rested awhile with fate
And broke the battle on foemen,
Ere the end left widowed Eire
Lone with her desolate wail.

Lone, yet, unforsaken
Out of no far dim past
Call I the names of the last
Who strove and suffered for Eire.
Saddest and nearest of all,
See how they flock to the call,
The troop of the famous felons;
Who won no joy of the sword,
Who tasted of no reward,
But the faint flushed dawn of a wan sick hope,
And over whose lives there dangled
Ever the shame of the rope.
I call to your mind Lord Edward;
Tone with his mangled throat;
Emmet high on the gallows;
O'Brien, Mitchell and Meagher—
Aye, and of newer note
Names that Eire will not forget,
Though some have faded in far off lands,
And some have passed by the hangman's hands,
And some—are breathing yet.

Not for these, O Eire,
Not for these, or thee,
Pipers, trumpeters, blaring loud,
The throbbing drums and the colours flying,
And the long-drawn muffled war of the crowd,
The voice of the human sea;

Theirs it is to inherit
Fame of a finer grace,
In the self-renewing spirit
And the untameable heart,
Ever defeated, yet undefeated,
Of thy remembering race:
For their names are treasured apart,
And their memories green and sweet,
On every hillside and every mart
In every cabin, in every street,
Of a land, where to fail is more than to triumph,
And victory less than defeat.

## CEANN DUBH DEELISH

By William Rooney

O DEAR Dark Head, bowed low in death-black sorrow,
Let not thy heart be trammelled in despair,
Lift, lift thine eyes upon the radiant morrow
And wait the light that surely shall break there.
What though the grave hath closed above thy dearest,
All are not gone that love thee, nor all fled,
And though thine own sweet tongue thou seldom hearest
Yet shall it ring again, O Dear Dark Head.

O! Dear Dark Head that mourneth by thy waters
Crooning a caoine for the countless graves
Of valiant sons and brave true-hearted daughters
Waiting the angel's trump beneath the waves.
Take from each rising sun some ray to cheer thee,
Some gleam of glory from each sunset red;
They bring an hour all close and closer near thee
That shall avenge these graves, O Dear Dark Head.

O ! Dear Dark Head, though but the curlew's screaming
Wakens the echoes of the hill and glen,
Yet shalt thou see once more the bright steel gleaming
Yet shalt thou hear again the tramp of men ;
And though their father's fate be theirs, shall others
With hearts as faithful still that pathway tread
Till we have set, oh ! mother dear of mothers,
A nation's crown upon Thy Dear Dark Head.

O ! Dear Dark Head, let not thy waiting daunt thee,
The future, if thou willest can be thine,
The past can summon up no shades to haunt thee
Of perjured faith or desecrated shrine ;
Lift, lift thy heart then for each year of mourning
Each sigh you breathéd, every tear you shed
There yet shall be a jewel bright adorning
Thy mantle's myriad folds, O Dear Dark Head.

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